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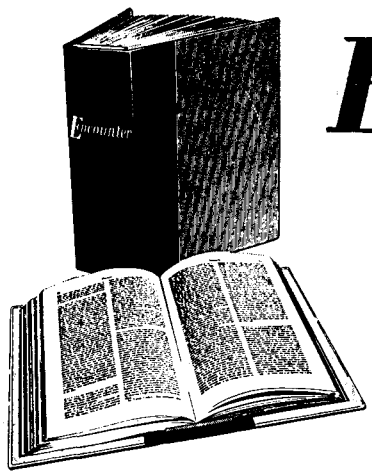

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MANAGING EDITOR: *Margot Walmsley* ASSISTANT EDITOR: *Bryan Healing*
GENERAL MANAGER: *Anthony Robinson* ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: *John Hall*
ADVISORY BOARD: *Maurice Cranston, D. J. Enright, Anthony Hartley, Leo Labedz, Goronwy Rees, Edward Shils, John Weightman*
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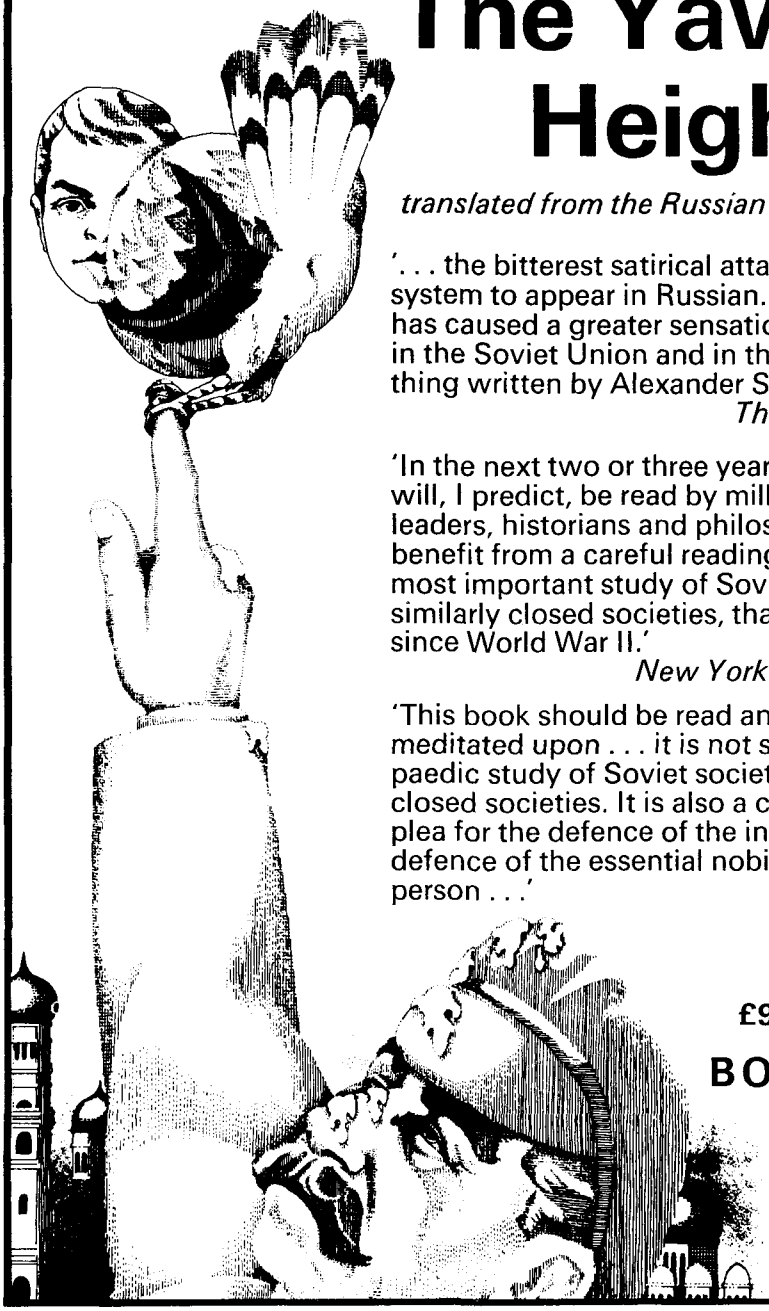
ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV

The Yawning Heights

translated from the Russian by Gordon Clough



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Douglas Dunn

Old Women Without Gardens

SUNLIGHT on a bowl of apples on the table by the window encourages an appreciative smile from Mrs Ellison as she turns from her mirror where she has fussed her hair and her face. She smooths the table-cloth that completely covers the polished surface on which there are remarkably few heat-stains, burns or scratches for a table that has given such good and long family service. The cloth is necessary. Mrs Ellison is afraid that the sunlight would blanch the shine she rubs to perfection several times a week.

There is far from enough room in her small flat. She wishes there was somewhere more convenient where she could put her table and where, too, it could stand with its three remaining matching chairs. A corner of her heavy curtains does not hang properly but is bunched on the window-ledge. She tugs the lined brocade and the material settles in a perfectly weighted hang. She draws the curtains together by a few feet more and is hampered by the table's awkward position. At this time of the year the afternoon sun can fall on the damask antimacassars on her chairs and draw out their whiteness. A last look round the room reveals her library book open on her armchair. She inserts her cloth bookmark on which a motto from Saint Augustine is stitched. *We must sing as we serve*, it says. Mrs Ellison thinks there is something wrong in closing a book on so agreeable an imperative.

She places the book on top of two other library novels which are sitting on the coffee-table many people have admired over the years. Its surface is an abstract design composed of hundreds of pieces of coloured ceramic. It was created by her youngest son when he was at the School of Art. Visitors say nothing about its design. Instead, they enthuse over the patience with which it has obviously been put together. As she pulls on her coat Mrs Ellison frowns as the little pile of novels catches a corner of her eye. She has read everything by the authors who please her most. So few books seem left for her to read. When something new comes out by an author whose books she enjoys then she immediately enters her name for it on the library's waiting-list. Two years ago the library announced that it was giving up its time-honoured practice of maintaining waiting-lists for books in demand. Mrs Ellison associated her name with the petition of protest that was drawn up. It is the only occasion on which she ever felt herself to be a member of anything other than her family. Once she has put on her hat, she re-examines her face in the mirror. She is sixty-seven years old and has been widowed for ten of them.

IT IS INVARIABLY THE CASE that Miss Drewery is never ready when Mrs Ellison calls. Miss Drewery's appearance is strikingly different from that of her friend who waits for her. She is tall, lean and muscled while Mrs Ellison is of a much plumper construction. Tennis is the source of Miss Drewery's anecdotes and memories. Tennis is said to explain her lithe movements and her quick and observant eye. Her skin is dark and young. She looks weathered by a long succession of girl's summers. No one expects a lady of Miss Drewery's age to run with a long stride but Miss Drewery when standing still gives Mrs Ellison the impression she is about to rush off like a sprinter should someone snap their fingers or a window slam shut. Most of the time she appears to be in a state of competition and intolerably fit. She can eat as much as she likes and never get fat, which Mrs Ellison envies, although she is also amused by the extent to which Miss Drewery behaves like an immature person. She has been inside Miss Drewery's

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flat on only three occasions. No wonder, she thought then, that Miss Drewery skimps on her invitations to tea. Her flat is a perfect disgrace. Her furniture is good, her curtains well-made and of excellent material, and her carpets are delightful, but the trouble is Miss Drewery leaves newspapers and books lying around any old where, with coffee mugs, plates with crumbs, vases in which flowers are two days withered, while the surfaces of her furniture are always dusty.

More irritating is the intercom through which Mrs Ellison announces her arrival to Miss Drewery after she has rung the doorbell. Miss Drewery's bell is indicated by a metal nameplate. Other tenants are content with small squares of paper affixed by drawing-pins. A buzzer makes it clear that the front door has been automatically unlocked and can be opened with a gentle push. Mrs Ellison steps into the hall feeling as bewildered as ever by labour-saving devices. Letters for tenants who leave for work before the post arrives, or for late-risers, or the negligent, lie on a small table beside a vase filled with tasteless plastic flowers. There is a mirror in a brass frame which continues downward into an expanse of unpolished brass from which four small hooks stick out. The brass-backed coat-brushes which presumably belonged to this elaborate piece of furniture have long since been removed while there are no galoshes, umbrellas or walking-sticks in the part of the object which sits on the floor, only a banana skin someone has dropped there on his or her way out. Mrs Ellison hopes they did not drop it there on the way *in*. That would be unforgivable.

AFTER MISS DREWERY has come downstairs, taking two steps at a time and landing at Mrs Ellison's feet with a thud, they leave together and collect Mrs Sinclair who lives several doors further along the avenue. She watches for Mrs Ellison entering Miss Drewery's front door. Once she is inside, Mrs Sinclair, who has been ready for some time, comes out and waits on the pavement adjacent to the front door of the house where she rents her small flat. Mrs Sinclair's shortness of temper and general impatience is believed to go with her pugnaciously diminutive size and the disgruntlement with which she fails to accept the inconvenience of sharing a bathroom and kitchen with other tenants she refers to as The Complete Strangers. It is not Mrs Sinclair's house but she behaves as if it is, and she treats her fellow tenants as if they are unwelcome guests who have vastly overstayed their welcomes.

All three ladies are waiting for that slight infirmity which will one day lead their relatives to suggest that they now think seriously about moving into what they will call a Nursing Home. Miss Drewery is perhaps exempt from this anxiety. She has no relatives although she does have friends in places like Malvern and South Africa. She worries however at having no one to tell her when she should give up her independence.

They are of small but secure income. Mrs Sinclair and Mrs Ellison enjoy the benefits of provision made for them by their late husbands. It is an unspectacular provision in Mrs Sinclair's case. She is acutely conscious of being unable to afford somewhere better to live. Miss Drewery has a higher income than the others. For years she was a private secretary to a succession of managing directors. Superannuation, cautiously administered, has left her high and dry and well enough off to afford two holidays in the year.

ON THE RAINLESS DAYS of summer they promenade the long avenues in which they live. It is a district of large houses. Many of them have come down in the world. A large number have been divided into apartments covering the complete price range. A few detached and substantial houses are still in the hands of people of quite considerable means, or the respectability to give that impression. Their gardens are the ones spared the daily assessments of these three ladies, Mrs Ellison, Mrs Sinclair and Miss Drewery. All others are marked out of ten.

Many old ladies can be seen in this district in summer, on the dry pavements, walking together. Younger people can be seen in T-shirts and some young men in those abruptly casual shorts made by snipping a pair of jeans across the thighs with a pair of scissors. Mrs Ellison and Mrs Sinclair look on this style with a good deal of suspicion. To Miss Drewery it is *sportif*—her word. But she, too, admitting her age, wears a light summer coat, a straw hat, carries a handbag and wears white gloves

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although less consistently than her friends. Mrs Sinclair always wears white gloves. She is relieved when Miss Drewery does not wear gloves. Miss Drewery is forever breaking pieces of chocolate in her handbag and the way she smears her gloved fingers and then tries to wipe them on the palm of a gloved hand is like the behaviour of someone who has never worn gloves before in her life, which is to say nothing of how Miss Drewery looks in her bag with furtive delight and smacks her lips. Mrs Sinclair is adept at giving the impression Miss Drewery is not with her, but has been bumped into and will soon be gone in a different direction.

THE PACE OF THEIR WALK is very slow. They pay attention to the gardens and you cannot inspect anything at speed. It is not unknown for Miss Drewery to break into a run and then come back to Mrs Ellison, who is too amused to know how to take such athletic behaviour, and Mrs Sinclair who scowls at Miss Drewery as if she is already too close to becoming one of The Complete Strangers. From the slowness of their walk you can tell when they are admiring a garden; and, too, you do not need to see the expressions on their faces when the same speed suggests that they are being highly critical. "Oh, do look at *that*!" one of them may exclaim and point out the delicious smudge of a lilac at the rear of a garden seen in a space between two houses. Sight of a garden shed with its door open, a lawnmower standing ready for the shove, or a man with his back to her putting earth in a seedbox, reminds Mrs Ellison of a garden that was once hers behind a house that for years was never quite big enough and which one day became suddenly too large for her to manage. Mrs Sinclair does not look sensitive enough to have such memories, but she has them anyway, although never in public. In the evening, after she has switched off a television programme that is of no interest or which is calculated to offend her, she drifts away on the silence.

They hold fierce opinions on gardens as neglected as the tufted squares of grass that front the houses they live in. Fortunately, all three live at the front of their houses, overlooking the street. They are spared views of the angeringly overgrown gardens at the back. Horticultural disasters tend to come in batches of several together. You can hear the tut-tut of their indignant points of view like the stamping of small, infuriated feet.

Miss Drewery has been known to say, "Yes, I know. They really *should* do something about it." "*Students*", Mrs Sinclair interrupts with a sneer. "Oh, but not always. Even some quite respectable people just don't have the *time*." Mrs Sinclair resumes her derision by pointing out that it has nothing to do with time. It is a question of principle. By now they know that Mrs Sinclair's favourite word is about to be used. "It is a matter of *inclination*." Mrs Sinclair is convinced people are no longer *inclined* to do as they ought, to behave in the way they used to behave. And Mrs Ellison agrees with her. All her life she has agreed for the sake of avoiding the unpleasantness of an argument. At moments like this, she points towards something nice—a new coat of paint on a fence, a show of flowers—knowing Mrs Sinclair will approve and that inspecting it and reckoning up the marks due to it will either change the subject or shut Mrs Sinclair up.

ONE GARDEN is their particular delight. They have gone so far as to confess to its middle-aged owner that he has been awarded ten marks out of ten. He has been off work since Christmas on account of his chest. The doctor encourages him to keep up with the light labour it takes to keep his garden the way he wants it. Mrs Ellison considers it admirable that he should persevere through thick and thin so affably when it would be easy to let things slip. They are concerned for his health. A finicky attention has been paid to every blade of grass on the small lawn in front of his house. It reminds Miss Drewery of the Centre Court at Wimbledon before the first day's play. A neighbour's laburnum hangs yellow on its massy gallows. It is more yellow than yellow itself.

Today the gardener is watering some small plants in a weedless border. Water descends and spreads in thin, delicate sprays from his can. They greet him and his sad, thoughtful expression changes to another which shows he is pleased to see them. Then he shows them a large white rose of which he is extremely proud. "It's so *early* for it to be so *large*", Mrs Sinclair says with emotion. She knows a thing or two about roses and her expertise makes

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her admiration of this one impressive. He tilts it gently towards them with his hand. It bows in homage.

Once this pleasant interlude is over, they walk further on, as satisfied as judges who have just given full marks to a competitor in the Olympic figure-skating championships. The nice old man in the linen jacket who walks his dog stops for a brief moment. He shares in their admiration of a squarely barbered privet hedge and their disappointment at the recent uncertainty of the weather. They also observe together and with some pleasure that the quite nice young man who really *ought* to do his garden more often has, in fact, done it, and quite thoroughly. If they could catch sight of him at his window, they would smile, all, that is, except Mrs Sinclair, who isn't too sure, and who suspects that in a month's time it will be as weedy as ever.

They make their customary remarks on how nice that old man is. Mrs Sinclair says his dog is so well-behaved it is the only dog she can imagine putting up with in the house. There is little conviction in the way she says it, but Miss Drewery knows what she means. Mrs Sinclair spots a wildly untutored hedge which after the recent rain has shot up to a variety of rugged heights. It is too high for them to see through to the front windows of the house and shame its owner.

THEIR DESTINATION is a public park. Before they arrive there, Mrs Ellison is already wondering about what time is most suitable for her to ask if Miss Drewery and Mrs Sinclair would like to come back to her flat for a cup of tea. She likes to know well in advance. Everything is already prepared. Immediately after her light lunch, she set cups and saucers on a tray as she always does. But she likes to sit in the park and think of what biscuits are in the tin and to picture her china in their hands. What causes her slight perplexity is that she feels it is only considerate to Miss Drewery and Mrs Sinclair for her to bide her time. One of them may well want to offer afternoon tea herself, and it is just as rude to be too quick and pressing as it is not to offer at all. She was brought up to feel these dilemmas as other people feel pain. She understands Mrs Sinclair's reluctance to impose on them with her shared bathroom and her shared kitchen. Miss Drewery, she realises, is hardly organised for the undertaking. Yet she hates to leave it until the last minute. It always makes her feel she has taken these words of invitation out of one or the other's mouth.

This park is *their* garden. Any number of small incidents can happen during the hour or so they sit there on their especial bench which was donated by a widow in her will. Mrs Sinclair can be thrust into an unbalanced state of mind by the noises of children or by the look of their inattentive young mothers, while the sight of a young man obviously the worse for drink leads her—as Miss Drewery says—to blow her top. A tramp staggering across the park with his supermarket bag stuffed with newspaper bedding can excite her into raising the disturbing subject of capital punishment.

Most of what they say to each other takes the form of a commentary on what they see. Often it is no more than descriptive or a statement of the obvious. "That boy has climbed to the top of the statue." Mrs Ellison's delivery is not altogether one of complaint, or affront, although her companions accept it as a mixture of both. "There ought to be more park attendants", Mrs Sinclair asserts. Miss Drewery agrees, remembering a previous remark of Mrs Sinclair's to the effect that it is studiously impertinent of the municipal gardeners not to acknowledge her presence from time to time.

It is speculative to say it, but each lady feels she has perceived the glamorous proprieties in the municipal gardens, and that this minor epiphany of a vision of the politics of roses is the climax of their afternoons. Queen Victoria's statue stares across the open field of the park's centre towards Prince Albert who faces her on the other side two hundred yards away. Both figures are seated and Mrs Sinclair sees them in her imagination as at opposite ends of a regal dining-table. Having read a good deal about Queen Victoria, Mrs Ellison is in a position to inform Mrs Sinclair that Prince Albert was long since dead and mourned by the time of life at which Queen Victoria is depicted in the park's statue. It is a point of information she resists bringing out into the open in spite of Mrs Sinclair's verbal rhapsodies. There is a long silence following Mrs Sinclair's flights of fancy in which she then, for her own benefit, envisages a service of silver on the imaginary table, the absolute correctness of the servants,

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the erect and reliable footmen, a totally dependable butler, and a discreet chamberlain who stoops slightly by Her Majesty's head to whisper that her Prime Minister attends her in the drawing-room on a matter of business most pressing for the well-being of the Empire—childlike but savage India, or General Gordon among the woolly-headed Sudanese, or the feckless and artistic French up to their devious tricks or smudgy oil-paintings.

A CONSPIRATORIAL HUSH surrounds their bench. No one who catches sight of them in the passing comes away with the impression they seem to be trying to put across—that they own this park, and that it obeys their inclinations and supports their world-views. "The pond just isn't cleaned out as often as it *should*." Miss Drewery agrees while Mrs Ellison says to herself that there is nothing in the slightest wrong with the pond. "It really can have a disgusting *pong*", says Miss Drewery, holding her nose to resonate the word "pong" into the expressive sound she gave it when she was a girl.

Mrs Ellison does not think twice about the small boys with their fishing nets and empty jars that with a bit of luck will become minnows' worlds. To Miss Drewery they are people who will grow up to work in factories and give headaches to the managers she worked for with doting loyalty and brisk runs from office to office and office to mail-room. Or, if they become managers, then they will have grown up to become the sort of people who gave headaches to Miss Drewery and who often failed to offer a lift home from the company's tennis courts at the ends of otherwise delightful summer evenings. Her worst memories are of standing alone at bus-stops with her tennis racquet while people she knew drove past her.

IF SHE SAID anything about these painful recollections to Mrs Sinclair then her companion would remember how she and her husband behaved when they were seated in their imperious little four-door Vauxhall saloon. They had a way of sitting that exuded the pride they felt in being among the very first in the avenue to own a car. Confronted once again with the vexed ethics of offering lifts, Mrs Sinclair would unquestioningly recollect one episode in particular out of several which brought her to the boil at the time. They had been invited to the wedding of her sister-in-law's eldest boy. A couple who lived a few doors along the avenue were close friends of her sister-in-law's husband. They seldom actually *spoke* to this couple although they were civil enough any time they met them on the avenue. It was clear that these people had also been invited to the wedding. It was to be celebrated in a church a few miles away on the other side of the town and afterwards in a hotel in the same district. This other couple had no car. Mrs Sinclair had said to her, "Oh, but of course, *we* shall be making our way in the Vauxhall." "How nice!" the woman said. At first Mrs Sinclair interpreted the exclamation as a wholly gratifying gesture of joy in Mr Sinclair's car. Later she developed the suspicion that she had been misunderstood, although it was difficult for her to accept that anyone could be so presumptuous as to expect to travel in *her* car when at no time in the past had they received so much as a Christmas card.

In any case, that Saturday, the couple rang the doorbell at the moment when Mrs Sinclair was yelling to her husband that his best cuff-links were where he had left them. It was obvious that a deeply embarrassing mistake had taken place. By then it was too late for the carless couple to arrange for a taxi. In those days taxis were in short supply and it was impossible to get one in less than an hour. It was also far too late to catch a bus and still get there on time. A *change* of buses would in fact be involved. Torn between her own summing-up of the situation as impossible, and Mr Sinclair's constant whining about his cuff-links, she decided to be generous but sullen. There was nothing for it but suffer that pushy pair and hope they didn't expect to return by the same conveyance. What made the whole thing worse was that the man smoked. Not only that, but he talked incessantly of his war experiences with the Royal Corps of Transport. No amount of pointed coughing from Mrs Sinclair in the front seat made the slightest difference.

Mrs Ellison's late husband never owned a car in his life. He simply was not the sort of man who would give up his brisk walks into

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town. He had been a nervous, careful, disappointed man who kept himself to himself. "He certainly gave very little of himself to *me*." "What's that, my dear?" "What?" "You said something." "Oh, did I?" Mrs Ellison asked, disguising herself to Mrs Sinclair who, unlike Miss Drewery, could never accept that any friend of hers talked to herself.

"Is your son still as keen on his gardening, my dear?" "It's such a long journey", said Mrs Ellison, "and you have to change at Doncaster now."

AFTER ABOUT AN HOUR one of them will say, "It's beginning to get a bit chilly." It takes another five minutes before they do anything about it and prepare to leave. It is during these five minutes that Mrs Ellison picks her moment to invite them to stop at her flat for afternoon tea. Mrs Sinclair and Miss Drewery are only too willing. If she doesn't ask, they wonder why not. Mrs Sinclair returns the invitation infrequently and when she does she makes so much fuss about The Complete Strangers that Mrs Ellison ends up by suggesting that her flat, after all, is nearer. Miss Drewery never thinks about invitations. She was uninvited for years. Why should she bother? If they want tea in her flat, then all they have to do is ask. It does not amuse Miss Drewery when Mrs Ellison starts punching her cushions into shape, or when Mrs Sinclair picks things off the floor.

THEIR AFTERNOONS can be devastated by intrusive incidents. Last year, a man, apparently mad, cavorted on the gravel path in front of them and proclaimed himself to be the Acid Evangelist. His hair was long and dirty and his clothes were in that outlandish contemporary style these ladies can hardly be expected to condone. And he had lost a shoe. Mrs Ellison is acutely aware from her reading of her favourite authors that many of life's sensations have passed her by. Long ago she reached the conclusion that she was never intended for them in the first place. But that phrase is engraved on her mind. In spite of the tenacity she once brought to bear on crossword puzzles, it is an expression she has never been able to work out. "What on earth is an Acid Evangelist?" Mrs Sinclair didn't care what it was. "That ridiculous man was wearing *only one shoe*!" Miss Drewery stared after the man's wobbling departure and tried to be tolerant to spite Mrs Sinclair. Clearly, he was not on the managerial staff of anywhere. It was possible, they agreed, that he taught at the university.

A BALL LANDS abruptly among the rose-beds in front of them. A boy climbs the low iron fencing and enters the gardens enthusiastically to get the ball back, egged on by his friends. He asks the old ladies if they've any idea where it fell. They turn away in mournful disgust. Even Mrs Sinclair is temporarily speechless. Mrs Ellison is tempted to be helpful but fights against it, concentrating her mind on the standard set by Mrs Sinclair. Miss Drewery does the same. She wishes she was strong enough to contradict Mrs Sinclair who reminds her of a manager's wife which, indeed, is what she was. How these women distrusted Miss Drewery in her younger, private secretary days, and how insulting the way in which they made it clear, once they had seen her, that they had nothing to worry about. It is an irony she feels now that she spends her afternoons on this unequal footing with managerial widows.

The boy bursts through the rose-beds. His appearance conjures up a picture of low terraced houses of red brick, a father who squanders his dole in the pub, and a mother who does not feed him properly. There is no reason whatsoever why their intuitive summary of the boy should be accurate—in all likelihood, it isn't. Other boys standing by the fence urge him to get a move on. He brushes against the roses as he searches for the ball. Several times he is forced to stop and unpluck himself from rose-thorns. Rose petals detach and fall. Clusters of them break off and fall to the ground. He finds the ball and throws it to his friends. They run away with the ball at their feet as the boy struggles to unfasten himself from the persistent hooks of the rose-thorns.

Mrs Ellison, Mrs Sinclair and Miss Drewery watch him with horrified fascination. Their roses are so frail and delicate. It is like being told that for technical reasons their annuities have been cancelled. We are deeply sorry, but there has been a dreadful mistake, and your

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superannuation is all wrong. That unknowing boy looks at them. His expression of innocent pity encourages a tentative but grievously questioning smile to form on Mrs Ellison's face. He stops on the far edge of the rose garden and tugs the last thorn from his pullover.

THEY SIT watching the rose petals fall. Those that were merely loosened by the boy's presence now fall belatedly to the earth which is already strewn with petals from these poor quality, routinely-administered roses. It seems they will rain on the earth forever, that there will be no end to it. "It's beginning to get a bit chilly", says Mrs Sinclair. Miss Drewery is saying to herself that she's dying for a cup of tea. Mrs Ellison is reaching a decision—fastidious good manners be damned—that she would prefer to drink her tea alone today. "Would you care to join me for afternoon tea?" she asks.

Night Village

No hare pulls a legless man screaming
into the headlights by his beard.
Driving through the night is not dreaming.

Now it's after two and we are close
to a village asleep which is no
place much. It seems to be all there is.

Here are a few small shops, their unseen glass.
Here are two great dazzling headlights
approaching selfishly. They do not pass.

For at the far corner they are thrown
nowhere. Opposite the Shell garage
closed, suddenly, they're proved to be our own.

This is the brief empty blazing High Street
connecting the one dark road coming in
to the one dark road going out.

And we accelerate, become the speed
of night. Behind us, silence resumes while
in the mirror the village lights recede.

No hare pulls a legless man screaming
into the headlights by his beard.
Driving through the night is not dreaming.

Dannie Abse

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The BBC in a Self-Critical Mood

Has "Public Service Broadcasting" a Future?

A "Confidential" Memorandum—By STEPHEN HEARST

1

THE REITHIAN IMAGE of unswervingly austere high-mindedness in the public interest so impressed itself on his contemporaries and succeeding generations of BBC staff, perhaps most powerfully by handed-down unspoken assumptions, that many BBC men and women are taking it for granted that they are carrying out their broadcasting functions in the service of the public. It has hardly occurred to them that there could be any conflict between the BBC interest and the public interest.

2

THE BRITISH PUBLIC, on the other hand, does not appear to look at the BBC in quite the same way. It watches and hears our programmes with a mixture of admiration, irritation and neutral acceptance, takes it on trust that our external services are without an equal, but increasingly looks askance at our implied claims to embody, as nearly as is humanly possible, public broadcasting virtue. There is some evidence for this assertion.

3

IF WE COMPARE the two most recent Market Opinion Research International (*MORI*) polls on broadcasting, we find that in 1971 35% of those polled thought BBC Television the strongest favourable component in the total BBC image. In 1976, only 19% thought the same. Furthermore, in 1976, three out of four people believed both BBC and ITV to be responsible for scheduling clashes of programme, with more people blaming the BBC than ITV. Nearly half of those sampled think there is too much violence on television. Then, there is the BBC Audience Research "Thermometer."

4

IN AUGUST 1978, the Audience Research "Thermometer", an index of public satisfaction, stood at 32 for the BBC Television Service and at 65 for BBC Radio. In 1952, this same index gave a figure of 68 for BBC Television and 71 for Radio. Since the early 1970s the curve of this index has steadily declined for the Television Service, whereas the radio curve has remained fairly steady. Very few unbiased observers would conclude from these

THE struggle to establish "public service broadcasting" has been one of the "noble experiments" of our time, and is in danger of becoming a lost cause.

In the United States, where giant commercial companies rule the air waves, a small, loose, and rather amateur network of television and radio stations vainly tries to compete. On the continent of Europe, the public is served by state-dominated media, where—as in France, Germany, Italy—governmental censorship is intrusive, or the demands of political parties shape themes and coverage (and top appointments), or cells of mafia-style ideologues conspire to influence the dissemination of news and argument.

Even in Britain, the home of "Reithian idealism", the British Broadcasting Corporation—free from outside influences and paid for by compulsory licence fees—has been hard pressed by the emergence of a powerful and popular commercial television and radio network of stations. Now, for a profit (advertising is lucrative), the public is being served by an "independent" or alternative supply of news and entertainment.

*In the "confidential memorandum" which we publish—originally intended for "internal" BBC discussion—*STEPHEN HEARST *(Chairman of the BBC's think-tank, the "Future Policy Group") considers the crisis of Public Service Broadcasting in its British context, but with obvious implications for the mass media everywhere. In subsequent issues we will be continuing the discussion with various comments, criticisms, and counter-proposals.*

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figures that the quality of radio programmes is evidently superior to the standards currently displayed on BBC-1 and BBC-2 screens and a deeper explanation of the phenomenal discrepancy between these radio and television figures seems called for.

5

SEVERAL FAIRLY OBVIOUS explanations for the drastic decline of the index from 1952 come to mind at once. Twenty-six years ago television was a novel experience; virtually every other programme contained unfamiliar subject-matter; new television conventions were being forged every month. Sets became better, screens larger, cameras lighter, producers bolder, the public more sophisticated. New techniques took the viewer to the operating-table, to the depths of the ocean, to the moon and back. Colour in the mid-'60s provided further irresistible attraction. Since the early '70s, all these attractions have gradually been taken for granted. The momentary excitement at seeing Calais Town Hall lit up and live on your screen in the early '50s has now given way to instant irritation if there is frame-slip on a live relay from Argentina. The viewer's sense of wonder has gone. Television has become a familiar, to some over-familiar, feature of the landscape.

6

IT WOULD BE ILLUMINATING to have the corresponding figure for commercial television but ITV audience measurement figures are obtained by different methods and do not allow instant comparison. In any case, we can safely assert that the British public expects more from the BBC. Every licence-holder pays directly for the institution and its operations whereas the ITV is perceived either as "cost free" or something of an extra. The sins of the BBC, real or imagined, are committed at *our* expense, the sins of commercial television are the sins of the market-place where virtue is rarely expected on display.

Goldie's View

7

AS ASTUTE AN OBSERVER of the broadcasting world as Grace Wyndham Goldie[1] believes that the British public now harbours a deep resentment against the BBC Television Service and finds in the decline of the index of public satisfaction confirmatory evidence of her view. The resentment, in her opinion, is caused, first, by a widespread feeling that the BBC is making and transmitting programmes not in the public but in its own institutional interest and, secondly, through the public's feeling of being got at and assaulted by views and values to which, by the very nature of the technology, it cannot reply or adequately respond. Her own prescription would be to give as many local communities as feasible access to the television medium by an expansion of local television. She is, in consequence, opposed to the Government's backing of the Annan Committee proposals for an "Open Broadcasting Authority", rating the immediate expansion of community television as greatly more important than the establishment of a fourth national channel.

8

THE REMEDY OF THIS great television pioneer is to cure the adverse reactions to television by yet more television, albeit organised at local level. The extraordinary discrepancy in the index figures as between television and radio is, however, explainable in other terms. The undifferentiated nature of the Thermometer and its questioning also means that non-generic television has had thrust upon it the national role previously played by radio. Radio with one local and four national networks, can satisfy a greater range of programme demands than television. Moreover, it may be deemed by its listeners to allow other activities during the very process of listening. Much radio listening has undoubtedly become "background listening." There is by contrast relatively little "background viewing." Youngsters up to 14 years of age now watch up to 30 hours each week, many adults only a few weekly hours less. Our producers' protestations that there is a knob to be turned off as well as on would sound convincing if we did not bend all, or very nearly all, our professional skills to seeing that the telly's knob is kept turned on. Indeed, the counting of heads and the accompanying value judgments of good or not-so-good figures are given considerable emphasis at our television weekly review boards.

Could it not be the case that our very success in getting millions of television viewers hooked to their screen creates some of the reaction that is expressed in the lowest index of satisfaction in the history of the Television Service?

Are the passivity of reception, the effortlessness of watching, not possible factors in audience reactions that a public service aiming at the public good ought at least to take into consideration?

Is it not arguable that a single rose grown under our own care in our own garden appears to give us

[1] Grace Wyndham Goldie was the most influential BBC Television "Current Affairs" producer in the immediate post-War years and was subsequently in charge of BBC Television "Current Affairs" output. Under her leadership, a whole range of new programmes and broadcasting formats reached the public. The period 1955–65 during which she played a leading role in BBC Television is now widely regarded as the most fruitful in recent British television history. She has written an important book on current affairs television under the title *Facing the Nation: Television and Politics* (Bodley Head, 1977).—ED. NOTE.

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more satisfaction than a string of even the most superb television programmes?

9

BEFORE PURSUING the disenchantment, however, a word of warning against taking the BBC "Thermometer", based on a scale of Plus 100 to Minus 100, too seriously. It asks three very general questions only, which relate to general audience satisfaction. Current audience figures as well as reaction indices to individual programmes on both radio and television tell a different story. Moreover, the autumn schedules of the Television Service have resulted in an appreciable rise in the "Thermometer" figure. We must not base a disquieting argument on a single set of figures, but absorb this information in the context of other evidence.

Disenchantment & Decline

10

CERTAINLY THE PHENOMENON OF audience disenchantment is hardly confined to this country.

In the United States, 1977 made history as the first year in the television march of time during which the total amount of viewing declined (again, more a straw in the wind, because a single year's figures allow no very solid conclusions). In Western Germany, the German Chancellor appealed for a six-day television week, an idea approved of, so a subsequent German poll indicated, by a large majority of German citizens. It seems unlikely that Dr Schmidt would have mooted that telly-denying thought in the first place, had he not anticipated pretty well what his fellow citizens were feeling. In Italy the prevailing television anarchy is not merely the electronic reflection of a divided nation, it can also be interpreted as a characteristically Latin response to the stale RAI programme diet. In Sweden, the second major restructuring of broadcasting services within a dozen or so years points to deep national dissatisfaction with broadcasting in one of the freest and most trouble-free of Western democracies. In France, viewing appears to have declined by over 12% according to the latest figures.

11

THE PUBLIC'S POSSIBLE DISENCHANTMENT with the BBC may, of course, have wider causes. Indeed, it is part of the BBC's revealing defensive stance that these wider causes are cited first while more adjacently situated broadcasting causes are left in wraps. Britain has, in terms of international influence and share of world trade, gone through a period of steep national decline; as principal and faithful public recorder of that decline, the messenger is bound to be blamed for the content of the message. Do not *The Persians* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, two respectable classics if ever there were any, testify to the unfortunate fate of messengers in classical times?

Furthermore, since the reputation of the BBC is undoubtedly very high abroad, where the tie between British decline and the BBC is not so immediately apparent, does not this unexampled international standing refute internal national doubts about the BBC? Certainly, any wholly dispassionate analysis of BBC performance and behaviour must bear these arguments and counter-arguments in mind and avoid falling into the comfortable trap of reductionism. The universe may have been brought into existence by a single creator, but most things created by fallible men are not due to single causes.

12

WHAT ABOUT internal disenchantment? Much is talked about it, little enough written. That the BBC with its fixed income became a prime victim of inflation and of subsequent incomes policy can by now be taken as read. Let us then agree that we are absolutely and relatively badly paid, that our capital investment in new technology has been too low, that many of us work in seedy and dilapidated surroundings.

But material rewards and circumstances that feed on memories of better days would not by themselves explain the curious distancing that many loyal members of the Corporation have put between their work and private opinion as against the public BBC viewpoint. That distancing is possibly the most disquieting symptom of a growing internal malaise. True, we have been under one microscope or another for too long. The inspection is now over and we have, given a clipped wing or two, survived. But material circumstances were bad in the halcyon '50s when, in converted Lime Grove bedsitters, *Tonight, Panorama* and *Monitor* were born.[2] The microscope was there in the early '60s when it was called Pilkington and no Kensington House slide laid itself under it for dissection. That "distancing" will need further study if we want it to shrink.

There *is* one piece of evidence to hand, however, flawed but more revealing than any other: the book about the BBC by Professor Tom Burns of Edinburgh University, who helped the Annan Committee as rapporteur. Professor Burns talked to

[2] *Panorama, Tonight* and *Monitor* are famous British television programmes all of which started in the 1950s. *Panorama* is still the weekly "flagship" of BBC Television Current Affairs and *Tonight* is still rarely out of the news. *Monitor,* a weekly Arts magazine edited by Huw Wheldon, eventually gave birth to a huge Music-&-Arts television output which, on the whole, is not matched by other television services.—ED. NOTE.

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dozens of BBC staff in the early '60s and again in the early '70s. He observed a striking change in staff attitudes which had taken place in the intervening years. Whereas at the earlier date the phrase that staff members used was that they worked "for the BBC", this statement became modified to working "*in* the BBC" ten years later. The "distancing" had begun. Again, a few years later a head of department could be seen to be disagreeing in public with his Managing Director. The distancing had further progressed, so that whereas the public may now perceive a difference between what it believes to be the public interest and the BBC institutional interest, even relatively senior members of the Corporation have begun to draw similar distinctions from wholly different premises. Professor Burns characterises this distinction as an emergent transfer of loyalty from a previously accepted BBC ethos to a narrower and stricter professionalism. (How far the previous BBC ethos is removed from the professionalism of the late 1970s may be gauged from Sir William Haley's talk on Radio 3 on the 30th anniversary of the Third Programme in which he approved of the anonymity of Third Programme producers who were getting their satisfaction, he thought, in the public service they were rendering.) The exercise of this narrower "professional" as against the wider BBC "social context" judgment is nowadays almost daily in evidence. And Burns' "professionalism" has now found its permanent niche in the Government's White Paper of July 1978.

13

THE WIDER BBC SOCIAL CONTEXT: how many myths have had to be erected in the continuity of its proclamation! That there is a vast bureaucracy divorced from programme-making, sustaining its further existence by the manufacture of fog with which it manages to obscure issues as well as its own unnecessary existence. Even the perspicacious Lord Annan has fallen for this Kensington House creation.

Without now wishing to argue the point in detail, it must be re-stated that no broadcasting institution is more programme-orientated than the BBC and that no other broadcasting institution has as many of the highest positions held by people who themselves have years of programme-making under their belts. Indeed, a good case could be made for saying that vacillating management is sometimes due to ex-programme-makers not wishing to interfere with a producer's freedom which they regarded as precious when they themselves produced the programmes. Nevertheless, the highest BBC office-holders are nearest the firing-line of public accountability and must continue to assert the vital need for that accountability. The social and political context within which the BBC must operate is all-important and will not go away.

Towards Re-Definitions

14

IF THEN SOME OF THE FOREGOING ARGUMENTS amount to at least partial evidence that the BBC's essential persona does not command quite the widespread allegiance that it once virtually assumed, ought we not to try and redefine what public service broadcasting as practised by the BBC should amount to?

Certainly, many voices have been raised within the BBC asking for a clarion call to re-awaken the old loyalties or for a lead. Now this is not a time when "leads" have been gladly accepted. Nevertheless, we ought to try and see whether we can state without fear or dishonest vagueness what the BBC stands for or can be made to stand for.

15

THE GOVERNMENT White Paper offers little comfort in making no distinction between the BBC and our commercial competitors as instruments of public service broadcasting. It simply states that

> "the Government's principal conclusion is that our broadcasting services should continue to be provided as public services and should continue to be the responsibility of public authorities. The concepts of the broadcasting authority and of public service broadcasting have stood the test of time. They should form the foundation for the future."

Although the IBA is of course a responsible public authority, the commercial basis of the programme companies, wholly dependent on commercial profit for the successful pursuit of their operations, marks a crucial distinction from the ethos of the BBC. Commercial broadcasting is entirely aware of this distinction and constantly seeks to minimise or obscure it by seeking to change its name by a kind of deed-poll to "Independent." The acquiescence of the BBC in this name-change is injurious to BBC interests because by implication it makes the BBC appear less than independent.

Yet as inescapably as the earth rotates round the sun so must commercial broadcasting try to maximise its audiences a great deal of the time to stay in business. A very great deal of commercial local radio, with its vast amount of needle-time, is pop radio. A good deal of commercial television needs to be addressed to majority audiences. What has made commercial television greatly different from its American counterpart are three things:

the total divorce of advertising from programme-making;

the control by the IBA and its insistence on programme balance;

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the continued strength of the BBC as the national instrument of broadcasting.

This is not to say that the commercial system does not often produce better programmes than the BBC does. Indeed, the BBC often adopts precisely the wrong stance with respect to the commercial competition. It criticises its programmes much more severely than its own programme performance (the number of derogatory references to commercial programmes in the minutes of our programme review boards is legion). But it meekly swallows the commercial system's insistence on its "independence"; whereas we should be generous to give praise where praise is due and merciless in describing the competitive system for what it is: *commercial.*

16

FOR THE BBC public service broadcasting system to survive, it is essential for the BBC itself to be aware of its fundamental difference from any commercial operator. Very high-placed BBC officials have in recent times thought it hard to defend any increase in BBC Local Radio because the alternative increase in commercial radio could be sold to the British public as "free", an additional service that would cost the public nothing.

Here is a loss of faith in the BBC that could be fatal to its survival in the long run. Very little in this life is free. Nothing is free in broadcasting. You can either get broadcasting services by having them financed directly by government; or by the community in the shape of a licence fee; or you, the citizen, pay for them through the goods you buy in the shops. It is these goods that account for the commercial system's operating revenue and profit. That the BBC should virtually have ceased to point this out has not done it much good. For the licence-payer will become more and more reluctant to pay for an increased licence if he or she can get similar services "free."[3] It would be salutary for the nation to be told more often how much each household in the United Kingdom is paying for the commercial radio and television operations.

"Capitalist-Images?"

17

THUS WE COME TO a *first* characteristic of good public-service broadcasting—its freedom from the commercial profit motive and its consequent freedom to use the public air purely for programmatic reasons.

This independence from the prevailing economic system has another consequence. Public service broadcasting, financed by a licence fee, must work within the value system set by Western democratic assumptions. It is dependent on the political and cultural will of a democratic nation. Its system of finance, however, makes it partly independent of the prevailing economic system. You could levy a licence fee under a socialist economic system as well as you now do under a mixed economy. In sharp contrast, commercial radio and television are entirely dependent on the private sector of the economy.

This contrast is fundamentally important, however, because the British nation is overwhelmingly united over the virtues of a Western democratic system, but divided over the advantages or disadvantages of our economic order. The defence of the licence fee, therefore, rests on more than the frequently proved lack of any alternative to finance the BBC. Nothing illustrates this argument better than a quotation from Susan Sontag's recent book *On Photography*:

> "A capitalist society requires a culture based on images. It needs to furnish vast amounts of entertainment in order to stimulate buying and anaesthetise the injustices of class, race, and sex."

One would need to be a rigid Marxist to believe this to be true of BBC Television.

18

THE SECOND CHARACTERISTIC of public service broadcasting must be the sturdiest editorial independence of government, achieved within the rules of Western democracy.

No broadcasting system can attain total independence and it is wholly utopian to imagine that it could, although the premises of the arguments of some broadcasters suggest they have embraced this fallacy. In our society broadcasting must be part of the democratic tree and all broadcasters must realise they are sitting on one of its branches. They will fall off if they use a saw. There is a further consequence of this argument. Anti-democratic politics, movements with the overt or covert aim of destroying our system of government, should have their arguments and methods exposed but not aided by a Western democratic public service broadcasting system. It is not part of Western democratic broadcasting to help itself to commit suicide.

It is characteristic, on the other hand, of profoundly undemocratic movements to make up for their electoral failure by sensational acts to ensure publicity for their views which they could not otherwise achieve. Public Service broadcasting

[3] The current annual BBC television licence fee is £25 for a colour-set and £10 for a black-and-white set. (There is no separate licence for radio, which is financed from the receipts of the colour licence.) The fee is the lowest in Europe. The BBC's External Services are separately financed by a Foreign Office grant-in-aid but enjoy the same editorial independence as the rest of the Corporation.—ED. NOTE.

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must therefore be constantly aware of the ground its *own* roots are planted in and be equally aware of the limits its own liberalism must ultimately set to allow it to stay alive against totalitarian forces of various persuasions.

19

NOW IT WILL BE ARGUED that commercial broadcasting operations in this country practise precisely the same code and jealously guard the same independence as the BBC boasts of, so that no distinctions can safely be made in this sphere between the BBC and its competitors. This argument ignores the ultimate reality and structure of British broadcasting. It is precisely because the BBC continues to be *the* national instrument of broadcasting, hence with its two television and four national and one local radio networks the most influential component of the entire British broadcasting structure, that it is the principal guardian of standards and defender of the "independence faith."

It is relatively easy to think of some commercial broadcasting programmatic contributions to British broadcasting over the years, harder to point to any fundamental policy innovations that have not first emanated from the BBC in the course of its history. As long as the BBC remains the predominant force in British broadcasting, the "me-too-ism" of commercial broadcasting will help its independence. Thus, paradoxically, the good health of the BBC becomes a supreme interest of all IBA broadcasters and they should be constantly made aware of this interest.

If the BBC were to disappear it is arrogant and insular to speculate that the particular forces that have made American broadcasting a supremely successful merchandising operation would somehow become more public-spirited if managed by British gentlemen. The good name of British broadcasting was achieved largely because of the public service broadcasting ideals of the BBC below which no competitor, as yet, dares fall.

20

A THIRD CHARACTERISTIC of BBC public service broadcasting is security of employment for its staff. The commercial operations do not and cannot afford anything remotely like the same security. Thus, short of being found with a hand in the till, an established BBC staff member can look forward to an entire professional career within the BBC.

This permanence has great advantages as well as disadvantages. In the News and Current Affairs field, in particular, agreed rules and codes of practice are at the heart of BBC transmissions and these cannot be operated successfully by a predominantly freelance staff. The essential ethos of BBC public service broadcasting is easier to pass on to junior colleagues over a number of years than to freelances whose almost exclusive concern is to have their work published. Permanent employment removes freelance worry about where the next day's meal is to come from. It ought to, but does not always, make each post-holder more disinterested.

On the other hand, talent is sometimes short-lived. Civil Service procedures do not mix in easily with show-business practice. A producer is habitually regarded by his colleagues, though not by the Service, as no better than his last show, yet enjoys a lifetime of security. Some people are burnt out at 42, others (like Rudolf Cartier or R. D. Smith or Donald McWhinnie) did sterling work in their fifties and sixties.

An efficient and self-confident public service broadcasting organisation must try to combine the best of both worlds. It must become neither wholly "arthritic" with "spent talent" which it cannot dismiss or employ elsewhere, nor be dominated by freelances whose concern for public service ideals must often be deemed secondary to that of their self-advancement. There is one other aspect of a permanent employment policy—training and retraining. The BBC does an immense amount, says little about it in public, and ought to say more. The additional career opportunities that a large public service broadcasting system provides are extended by BBC training schemes, yet traditionally BBC training has never enjoyed the internal reputation to which, through the practical results of that training, it is entitled.

21

THE BBC ALSO SAYS VERY LITTLE about another vital aspect of the public service it renders, as quite the most important patron of the Arts in the United Kingdom. Lord Redcliffe-Maud, in his 1976 Gulbenkian Report on *Support for the Arts in England and Wales*, wrote as follows:

> "The BBC patronage record is so good that the chief fear for the future lies in financial stringency. The Government therefore, when considering applications for an increase in the licence fee, must take full account of what the BBC does for the creative artists and performers."

The reason why the BBC is reluctant to stress its patronage role is largely financial. Its stewardship of public money from over 18 million licence-holders is exercised so that it should produce, in radio and television, the best programmes it is capable of broadcasting. Patronage is, therefore, partly a by-product of first-rate public service broadcasting. Yet it needs to be said that no other public body exists in Britain that is of equal importance to our composers, writers, musicians, and actors. Revealingly, our commercial competitors make a great deal of fuss when they broadcast an opera or

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a Greek drama and spend a fair amount on advertising such rare occasions. Such publicity amounts to a tribute that mercantile success pays to public broadcasting virtue and no more. The BBC performs this kind of service day-in and day-out and takes it for granted that it should continue to do so.

Demagoguery & "Total Freedom"

22

THE SHIFT IN EMPHASIS to professionalism noted by Professor Burns has among other things had the curious consequence that we now have a vast preponderance of permanent staff imbued with the mentality of freelances. This is another way of describing the distancing of producers from the BBC's institutional stance. You could also say that "rights" are heavily asserted while "duties" are often ignored or thought irrelevant.

But broadcasters are poor political theorists yet extraordinarily talented in incorporating the *Zeitgeist* in their own persons. That *Zeitgeist* implies that you can greatly enlarge on rights without countervailing duties. Yet any half-fledged political theorist would point out that my right to extend my fist ends at the tip of your nose. We cannot *all* extend our fists. I have no absolute right to broadcast what I like without thereby infringing the right of my successor to do likewise, because the public may by then have got angry with the institution that allowed the broadcast in the first place. BBC management needs, therefore, in the name of first-rate public service broadcasting, to display courage in two opposed directions: *vis-à-vis* the public when some of its members object unreasonably to new ideas, uncomfortable discoveries of information, critical stances on cherished beliefs, or uncommon and upsetting creative insights. It must equally defend its duty of public accountability *vis-à-vis* those of its own staff who assert an unfettered right of free expression, regard all managerial qualifying judgments as censorship or (in the words of Kenith Trodd[4]) refer to widespread public anxiety over images and language as "petit-bourgeois demagoguery." It could be argued that our management has displayed the first type of courage more frequently than the second.

For it has not argued on purely intellectual grounds why it must retain the final editorial say on what should or should not be broadcast.

23

THE PRODUCER, WRITER, OR DIRECTOR who demands "total freedom" for the diffusion of his or her own work ignores the fact that this work, when broadcast over the public air, constitutes a partial act of force.

The choice of what is broadcast at any one time in this country is that of the broadcasting authority or its delegated staff. As a viewer I can choose between three television programmes and four or five radio programmes, or switch off altogether. In television this is a small choice. It is even further diminished by the professional skill that commercial television applies to its commercials and BBC presentation to the intervals between programmes because both aim to *keep the viewer* hooked to the set. All other forms of artistic or journalistic communication—papers, books, cinema, theatre, opera, ballet, concerts—require deliberate *acts of will* by their consumers. You choose to read a certain book, attend a cinema, go to a concert. But all you have to prevent the right of entry of concerts, opera, theatre, cinema, daily journalism, into your own home is the knob on your set. The right, therefore, of the creative broadcaster to broadcast will at times clash with the right of the licence-holder who denies his own participation and yet might resent having to turn off his set, which the small choice of alternative programmes might incline him to do.

The case for censorship in places of public entertainment is thus very much weaker because the public by its very presence demonstrates its own cultural preferences. It cannot make the same positive choice at present on television and radio. Moreover, not only is the public act of will implicit in public attendance at or use of cultural or journalistic events different from the semi-forced entry of broadcasting into the community's homes, the circumstances of public receptivity and private listening or viewing are fundamentally different.

These points are fairly obvious, yet are seldom made. They ought to be made a good deal more often by output department heads with producers *before* and not *after* a great deal of public money is committed to a given programme proposal.

24

THE MANAGERIAL public accountability stance sometimes enlarges a future producer's freedom more than is sometimes realised. This phenomenon has already been referred to in Paragraph 21 but needs to be made more explicit.

The defence of editorial independence of government, implicit in the showing of *Yesterday's Men*, must, for example, be weighed against the loss of documentary programmes of a similar political current affairs nature which was undoubtedly brought about by the deep distrust of the Labour Party of the BBC which this one programme engendered. There will be times when what is said in a programme is of such transcendental importance that it *must* be broadcast regardless of any possible political cost. The Granada *World in*

[4] Kenith Trodd is a prize-winning British television drama producer.—ED. NOTE.

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Action programme on oil supplies to Rhodesia might be a suitable example. Yet there will be other times when the broadcasting of certain programmes, which for all sorts of reasons may lack that final authority that makes them safe from damaging counter-attack, will *reduce* the rights and freedom of other producers to move in the same area because of the resulting opposition of an entire profession or community. Thus BBC editorial judgments have at times to be both programme-enlarging *and* programme-diminishing.

What is needed above all is that this should be confidently, indeed robustly, stated and explained to the staff. The intellectual initiative in public service broadcasting ought to be seen to lie, at least for part of the time, with those who are ultimately responsible for such broadcasting.

Emphasising Fundamentals

25

PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING must, in fine, be *seen* to be in the public interest and for the public good. When the community to whom it is addressed and which finances it is divided on what precisely constitutes its own interest and its own good, the service must fairly state the contending values, premises and conclusions in a way that demonstrates to the satisfaction of the entire community that it is as free from bias as is reasonably possible.

Such a service, however, does not stand apart from parliamentary democracy and does not offer aid and comfort to its enemies. It needs to expose totalitarian forces that would extinguish the freedoms we cherish were they to take over power, and it cannot be part of its business to be morally neutral in the exposition of ideologies that regard our system of government and our order with disdain.

26

WHEN THE BBC enjoyed a monopoly of broadcasting, its Directors-General expressed themselves with greater certainty about the fundamentals of public service broadcasting because they could rely on the respect of the community for the past performance of the Corporation but equally because there were, in the late 1930s and '40s, no greatly divergent views on how broadcasting in this country should be carried out. Once the nation, through its elected representatives, had decided to introduce another form of broadcasting, to be financed through advertising, and enjoined the two systems to compete for public favour, *ex cathedra* statements became more difficult. One system simply cannot live without trying to address itself to supposed majority audiences for the majority of its transmission time; the other believes it cannot live without retaining very substantial audiences for its programmes, for a substantial loss of majority audiences might be thought to lead to pressure for the abolition of the licence fee.

The dilemma was partly overcome in the late '50s and '60s by the brilliant production of programmes that combined quality and popularity, such as *Steptoe* and *Till Death Us Do Part*. But it

"Violence"

VIOLENCE *which is shown in too much detail or used to sensationalise programmes is to be banned from BBC television under a new set of rules covering not only drama but also news, current affairs and documentaries.*

Producers will be ordered to exercise tighter control and ensure that programmes containing scenes of brutality are thoroughly vetted before they reach the screen. The new code of conduct was endorsed by the BBC's Board of Governors last week.

It is the result of six months' study by a group of nine BBC programme executives under the chairmanship of Monica Sims, previously Controller of Children's Programmes and now head of Radio Four. The group has produced a 60-page survey on all aspects of violence on television and sets out a number of rules and guidelines.

Producers are warned against inserting scenes of violence into plays merely to give them more impact and excitement. It is pointed out that while violence has always been a part of drama from Greek tragedy through Shakespeare to modern plays, much of it has taken place off-stage and is merely referred to in dialogue. Similar techniques are recommended for consideration by television writers.

For example, some of the worst scenes of violence in such series as "Target" and "Law and Order", which upset some viewers, could have been avoided by this technique.

Producers are warned against using as weapons in programmes for children implements which are easily available to them, such as kitchen knives.

Violence in news programmes is also likely to be restricted. There has been concern over the way the race marches in Lewisham and the Grunwick mass pickets were pictured on TV news.

THE *Independent Broadcasting Authority is also discussing updating its violence code. The Authority has been looking into monitoring the amount of violence on the Commercial TV channels and is trying to set up a joint system with the BBC.*

They say that "The Sweeney", for example, was "not particularly violent." It was just very good: "when violence did erupt it was convincing and upsetting."

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH/DAILY MAIL

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is departing from the real world to make such exceptional programmes the basis of average expectation. Quantity and quality *are* difficult to combine. Talent, contrary to the *White Paper's* expectations, *is* limited; and there are no undiscovered reserves of talent lying fallow and waiting for the finger of God to be pointed towards them. In these circumstances, made so much worse by inflation which hits a fixed source of income harder than a flexible one, re-statements of public service broadcasting policy are more difficult to make. Yet this is not to say that we must not try now ("in the long run we will all be dead"). There *are* vast reserves of respect and regard for the BBC to be tapped, not abroad where our reputation could not stand higher, but right here at home.

These can only be mobilised if our broadcasting performance improves and if in our public statements and responses to weighty public requests the BBC acts with the conviction of confidence and is *acknowledged to be acting in the public and not in its own institutional interest.*

From what was said above, it seems we need to ask ourselves to what extent *fierce* competition with the commercial system is in our institutional interest or is wholly or partly in the public interest. We have not done so—yet.

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NOR IS THAT ALL. Television in particular is accused on various sides of being the source of many so-called contemporary evils: Violence in society, Law-breaking, Illiteracy . . . the list is fairly long. The BBC's response to such accusations has on the whole been: "Prove it and we will act on that proof when it is conclusively provided." It could well be that this is an institutional reply and that the public interest lies elsewhere, *at variance* with the institutional interest. At least, the *short-term* institutional interest. For it is doubtful if public service broadcasting can survive if it is not experienced in the long run by the community as wholly serving the public interest.

It does seem to follow that when numerous accusations, based on some research or other, are made against certain streams of BBC output, it ought not to be our practice *to put the onus of proof wholly on the accuser.* There will be a great many "suspected" areas of output; we must have enough courage to pursue and nurture such output and yet demonstrate equal courage in questioning that same output if serious doubts arise on the possible social harm it may be accused of causing.

In such cases, the onus of proof that no social harm is done may have to be partly shouldered by the BBC itself.

Conclusions

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(*1*) We need to recognise that the BBC institutional interest and the public interest may not always be the same.

(*2*) In the case of a clash between this institutional and the public interest, the institutional interest may in the future have to be made secondary to the public interest. (Alternation provides a good example. However cogent and fervent our defence of Cliff Morgan[5] and his admirable team is, the public is bound to perceive the transmission of identical pictures on two out of three channels as against its own interest. Since the World Cup and the Olympic Games last for a fortnight, the public is given rather a long time to recognise its own best interest and the resulting loss of good will towards the BBC may be considerable.)

(*3*) Public accountability needs to be made manifest at lower than controller level. Indeed, we have so shielded producers from the social and political reactions of the community to their work, to enable them the better to concentrate on their programmes, that it is common for them to wonder how management is spending its time. The phrase "bureaucratic fog" was born from such a sentiment. There is a case for getting production staff to *experience* public accountability to a greater degree (duty officers' logs of phone calls could be given wider distribution; correspondence about specific programmes could be passed on to production staff more often; more producers could be induced to attend public meetings; and producers might profit from spending day attachments as observers at management functions).

(*4*) Public service broadcasting requires the good will of the great majority of the community to whom it addresses itself, a community of licence-fee payers with a direct relationship to the BBC which we ourselves have always stressed in our dialogue with the Government. We cannot afford any alienation of that good will. The opinions of geographically distant customers are as important as metropolitan ones and metropolitan values need to be judged in relation to the United Kingdom as a whole, all the more since broadcasting is largely a metropolitan pursuit. A BBC system of checks-and-balances in programme judgments, as between London and the provinces, England and the national regions, town and country, is all the more needed because our commercial competitors, both in radio and television, can and do claim that their

[5] Cliff Morgan, a household name in Rugby Union circles, is one of the great players Wales has produced over the years, and among those rare sporting personalities who turned out to be born broadcasters, equally good in radio and television. He is now Head of Outside Broadcasts Group, BBC Television.—ED. NOTE

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smaller size and diverse geographical anchorage keeps them more closely in touch with their customers than the BBC can manage to do. If this line of argument is accepted, it may follow in practice that we may have to think of more effective ways of encouraging staff movement and location within the United Kingdom than we have hitherto managed.

(*5*) "Service to the democratic community" is a worthy ideal to which the BBC has the right and duty to subordinate collective institutionalism as well as individual self-seeking. We are dealing with a failure, for a variety of reasons, to respect or remember the primacy of the general public interest.

Yet it is easier to come up with this ringing generalisation than to suggest practical remedies. One possible psychological way forward is to look at the way the BBC awards "Brownie points." If we consistently awarded them for outstanding work in pursuit of the ideals we believe we need to uphold publicly, the results of such internal policies might become noticeable over the public air. (One small example: in the News and Current Affairs area, more professional pride is often expressed at "having got there and back in 24 hours" than in *what* was got in that time. It is easier to be proud of something that is measurable than of a programme weight or quality that is not.)

All in all, the larger community interest must prevail against factional special pleading under the guise of professionalism. Among immediate questions that larger community interest raises is the 50:50 convention in our competition with commercial television. We have here an area of reticence, because it is not altogether clear in whose interest the 50:50 expectation is being operated.

(*6*) If the community at large is in any way estranged from BBC programmes, arguments or practices, the BBC cannot expect to last into the 21st century.

(*7*) All these assertions and arguments are in turn based on the belief that the BBC remains the greatest British cultural invention of the 20th century and that its disappearance would be a colossal disaster. We must see to it that this disaster never occurs.

Phone

Somewhere a phone was ringing—perhaps for you.
It crooned like a chance that would change the world,
Though the room, when you got there, seemed undisturbed,
Dust and sunlight for a hundred years
No noise had ever got under. So,
It bothered you for a while, but friends came round,
And the summer was a deep, deep blue
That stretched over mountains and marram-grass
And paved terraces with drinks at sunset.
They were beautiful hours, weren't they,
High and open as alpine fields where even the cows,
Belled and indolent, sound musical.
You should have forgotten but it came back—
What the voice would say if you got there in time,
Something on a line you did not recognise,
Though the tone seemed familiar and the background
Rushed forward like a shower of bright coins.
Well, you went on: there was no one to say
It would not ring again or in time maybe
That you couldn't dial yourself. These nights draw in,
Misty light fading by four, but the words
At least will be clear and golden when they come,
Like "Why not meet me?" or "I forgive you."

Blake Morrison

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Michael Howard

"Many Reasons" for Viet Nam

On the Valour of Ignorance

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1977 the BBC broadcast a series of programmes, produced by Anthony Moncrieff, in which Michael Charlton interviewed a wide range of statesmen, soldiers and specialists, French, American, Vietnamese and British, who had observed at close hand, or been responsible for, the involvement of the United States in Viet Nam. Now they have published these interviews in full, sometimes at greater length than the form in which they were originally broadcast, with a linking narrative to provide a skeleton history of the whole disastrous episode; from the arrival of American OSS agents in Viet Nam in 1945 until the escape of the US Embassy staff by helicopter 30 years later.[1]

The result is a useful, possibly a unique, contribution to our understanding of these events, if inevitably a very uneven one. Its great, if necessary, deficiency lies in the lack of any evidence from the other side. We are treated simply to the sound of one hand clapping. As a result we have to decide for ourselves, on the basis of previous knowledge or, more probably, prejudice, what the Americans were dealing with in Viet Nam. Were they, as their government maintained and most of their people initially believed, defending the right of a people freely to choose their own government without intimidation and subversion from outside? Or were they, as the radical opposition at home insisted, upholding a puppet government against a people rightly struggling to be free? Admittedly evidence from Hanoi would not be unprejudiced on the matter, but the central issue remains unresolved, and the evidence is not available, certainly not here, probably not anywhere, for a definite verdict to be pronounced yet. (Nor, if the present régime in Viet Nam has its way, will it be available for a very long time to come.)

Another and perhaps more serious effect of this one-sided account is to reinforce the belief common to Americans across the entire political spectrum that what happened in Viet Nam was entirely the result of what the Americans themselves did or left undone. The activities of the Viet Cong are referred to only briefly in the linking narrative. The problems which the Americans faced, the social and economic structure of Viet Nam, the nature of the political élites, everything necessary to enable us to understand the situation as a whole, is touched on superficially if at all. Instead we are shown the unfolding of a political drama in which, as in certain plays of Corneille, there is essentially only one actor: one whose hubris brought its inescapable nemesis. Dramatically it is immensely effective, but life is more complicated than that.

ALL THIS IS SAID, not in denigration of the book, but as a warning not to take it as anything more than its authors intended: a collection of oral records whose value we must judge for ourselves. They are records which suffer from the drawbacks of all Oral History projects. The participants are speaking for the record. They are unlikely to be

MICHAEL HOWARD *is Chichele Professor of the History of War in the University of Oxford. His books include "The Continental Commitment" (1972), "War in European History" (1976), (with P. Paret) "Clausewitz on War" (1977) and "War and the Liberal Conscience" (1978). His article "Montgomery the Mascot" appeared in* ENCOUNTER *in August 1976.*

[1] *Many Reasons Why: The American Involvement in Viet Nam.* By MICHAEL CHARLTON and ANTHONY MONCRIEFF. Scolar Press, £10.

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lying, but equally they are unlikely to be telling the whole truth. And even if they are telling the whole truth as they recall it, the contrast between their tranquil recollections and the actuality of policy-making as revealed by contemporary evidence is sometimes startling. What emerges most significantly from such interviews is not so much what the subject says as the kind of person he reveals himself to be. And that sometimes requires more penetrating interrogation techniques than the bland, deferential approach adopted by the average researcher, from which even Mr Charlton is not immune.

Charlton and Moncrieff assembled a formidable team of interlocutors for their series, including Colonel Lansdale, Dean Rusk, William Colby, William Bundy, General Maxwell Taylor, General William Westmoreland, Ambassador Frederick Nolting and Ambassador Graham Martin; to name only the most eminent. There are some important gaps: Walt Rostow is represented only by a brief fragment taken from another context; and neither McNamara nor Henry Kissinger appears at all. Nor, naturally enough, does ex-President Nixon. As a result the story from 1969 onwards is rather thin. Up to that point policy had been discussed and made fairly openly, at many levels within the administration. Thereafter Kissinger played his cards very close to his chest indeed, setting plumbers to stop any leaks. His story will become available only in his own good time and at his own steep price. The editors do what they can with a contribution from the well-informed journalist Tad Szulc; but it is not the same thing at all.

ALL THE PARTICIPANTS emerge as honest, bewildered men who still believe they acted for the best, and still don't quite see what went wrong. Those who do have an explanation predictably blame someone else. William Colby, for the CIA, blames the military. General Westmoreland, for the military, blames the politicians. But obviously the road to this particular hell was paved with excellent intentions. One gains indeed from these contributions exactly the same impression as that given by the memoirs of the decision-makers of 1914, from which all, Edward Grey, Bethmann-Hollweg, Sazonov, Berchthold, Conrad, Poincaré, emerge equally baffled, equally blameless. Seekers after scapegoats will be no less baffled: these were all patently honourable men acting for the best. It is tempting to abandon the search for rational explanation and blame "the System", as Marxist historians of 1914 blame "capitalist imperialism", or liberals "the international anarchy."

THERE ARE, in fact, many parallels with 1914, if one may compare a uni-dimensional picture with a multi-dimensional one. The mixture of apprehension, national arrogance, misperception and misguided military expertise which characterised the Chanceries of Europe in 1914—not least Berlin—was prevalent in Washington in the 1950s and 1960s. Like the German and Austrian statesmen of the earlier era, American statesmen saw how a minor and local shift in the balance of power might produce a major and sinister transformation of the whole world order. Hanoi could do as much damage as Belgrade threatened in 1912–14 (or, for that matter, Egypt in 1956); so she had to be checked and chastised before matters got totally out of hand. Further, there was in the United States of the early '60s an enormous self-confidence and pride not unlike that of the Germans before 1914; a consciousness of national greatness seeking an outlet, a search for an appropriate challenge to their powers, a refusal to believe that any problem was beyond their capacity to solve. Statesmen who might themselves have doubts were conscious of a great ground-swell of public opinion bearing them on.

In addition to this self-confidence there was a genuine altruism comparable to that of the British in 1914. If the Administration saw Hanoi as a dangerous nuisance to be neutralised before it became uncontrollable, the American public was ready to see the Vietnamese, like the Belgians, as a gallant people defending themselves against totalitarian tyranny. In a kind review of a recent book in which I suggested that American idealism was a major factor in their involvement in Viet Nam, Mr A. J. P. Taylor dissented, laying the blame rather on American militarism. Unfortunately militarism and idealism cannot always be distinguished so easily. They have much in common with one another and not infrequently overlap. They did so in Europe before 1914, and they did again in the America of the 1950s. Visiting the country for the first time in 1960 I was struck by this phenomenon: the United States had not been, as Europe and, I believe, the Soviet Union had been, *debellated* by two huge wars fought on her territory. There was still a readiness, almost an eagerness in certain quarters, to fight a war if a just cause could be shown and, by preference, if it did not involve the use of nuclear weapons. It was an enthusiasm as noble as that which had swept the

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British in 1914; and like that, it was not to survive the ordeals which it so eagerly courted.

BUT VIET NAM WAS about the last place in the world, in those dying days of General Eisenhower's Administration, where anyone expected that American boys, however enthusiastic, would be called on to fight. All eyes were fixed on Berlin. Yet American involvement in Viet Nam was already some 15 years old. Messrs Charlton and Moncrieff begin their book brilliantly, by quoting the Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam of 2 September 1945:

> ". . . All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness . . . these are undeniable truths."

This sounds familiar, and so it should. It was drafted with such help as could be given by the inadequate memory of the American OSS representative in French Indo-China, Colonel Archimedes Patti, who is shown, in one of the few photographs in the book, with his staff standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Ho Chi Minh's representatives saluting the flag of the new-born Republic.

Patti's testimony is among the most interesting in the whole collection, though the most difficult to check from the documents. He was sent to Indo-China in 1945 to set up an intelligence network and to help the resistance against the Japanese. He was introduced to Ho Chi Minh who was, at first, "just another old Vietnamese", but who proved by far his most useful associate. His instructions, such as they were, for the post-War settlement, were "not to support the French objective of retaking their former colony, nor necessarily to assist the Vietnamese in achieving their independence." But US association with Ho Chi Minh gave the latter a legitimacy which he cleverly exploited against the French.

Dean Rusk admits that he also "was among those who authorised the dropping of arms to Ho Chi Minh during World War II", and the subsequent American *volte face* he attributes, not as one might expect to John Foster Dulles, but to Dean Acheson, "very much a North-Atlantic kind of man", for whom the formation of NATO, and thus the conciliation of the French, had overriding priority. But his initiatives were rapidly followed up by Dulles, who saw the main threat to world peace (according to Robert Bowie, Director of his Policy Planning Staff) in the expanding power of Communist China. Interviews are quoted with the French and British Foreign Ministers of the period, Maurice Schumann and Anthony Eden, to show how Eisenhower checked Dulles's desire to involve American forces in the region in 1954, at the time of Dien-Bien-Phu. Instead, Dulles despatched Colonel Ed Lansdale of the CIA to Viet Nam, with the blanket instructions "to help the people." Dulles did not say who "the people" were, but Lansdale took them to be anyone who opposed or feared the Communists; and he described with gusto the measures he took to sabotage the Hanoi government, to foment emigration to the South, and to create a non-Communist administration in Saigon, advising and assisting President Diem in consolidating his régime.

THIS, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED, was the heyday of "Containment." Everywhere on the periphery of the Communist world the State Department and CIA were consolidating or supporting anti-Communist régimes and alliances, pouring in money, advisers and aid. In Iran they had just toppled Mossadeq. In Egypt they were grooming Nasser. They had identified Turkey and Pakistan as key allies, and were forging a chain of alliances which stretched uninterruptedly from Norway to South Korea. From Washington South Viet Nam was seen simply as a small but necessary link in this chain. As Dean Rusk confessed with disarming frankness:

> "Here we were in this deadly confrontation with the Russians, and we thought it our duty to thwart them everywhere. . . ."

The cultural idiosyncracies, the economic complexities, the political structures of "the people(s)" involved were irritating if not irrelevant details. In the case of Viet Nam no one in the United States knew anything about them anyway. As Professor John Fairbank, one-time member of the State Department, put it,

> "the country was an absolute blank on the whole subject of Vietnam; and therefore the more easily could we impose upon it the ideas that we had in mind about the cold war and the necessity of fighting Communism. . . ."

As in Korea, the bad guys were in the North, the good guys were in the South. That, probably, was all they knew of Viet Nam and all they needed to know.

THEN CAME KENNEDY, at a time when Hanoi was taking the offensive again, westward into

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Laos, south into South Viet Nam with the reactivation of the Viet Cong. As William Bundy, a member of Kennedy's administration, makes clear, this renewed activity was seen in a global context, as part of a pattern of events which also embraced Cuba and Berlin:

> "The effect of Soviet belief in American firmness was a significant part of the reason why [Kennedy] decided to go ahead in Indo-China. . . .
>
> [There was] the sense that you had to stand firm in this area, that otherwise the idea of Communism as the wave of the future would have a very great effect."

But with Kennedy came not only a renewed determination to defend what were seen as "the Frontiers of Freedom", but a renewed confidence in American ability to do so. The Viet Nam problem was taken over by the New Frontiersmen: the Roger Hillsmans, the Robert McNamaras. "Very *gung-ho* fellows", observes Ambassador Nolting drily, "wanting to get things straightened out in a hurry, clean up the mess. . . ." And finally, as General Westmoreland points out, what had been a calculated political commitment under Truman and Eisenhower became under Kennedy something highly emotional and idealistic.

> "Very much ringing in my ears, and the ears of all officers at that time . . . was Mr Kennedy's very emotional and stirring inaugural address: we'll 'bear any burden and meet any hardships, support any friend, oppose any foe, to ensure the survival and success of liberty' . . . we felt pretty good about going to Viet Nam to fight for such an idealistic principle."

This was the force that was unleashed on Viet Nam: immensely strong, immensely well-meaning, immensely naive. The Rostow-Taylor mission despatched by Kennedy to report on the situation in Viet Nam discovered morale to be crumbling, confidence low, and "the Indians coming in through the windows. . . ." The last thing he wanted to recommend, avers General Maxwell Taylor, was the committal of American troops; but he could think of no other way to shore up the confidence of the South Vietnamese. So he came up with the clumsy and transparent proposal to send a non-combatant task force to help deal with the flooding of the Mekong delta, with a combatant force some 8,000 strong to protect them. (One can imagine Western reactions to a Soviet proposal to do the same in a Third-World country.) Kennedy did not like it; he saw the dangers and difficulties as clearly as anyone. But, whispering that he would ne'er consent, he consented. By the date of his assassination, there were 17,000 US troops in Viet Nam.

WHAT ELSE COULD Kennedy have done? With his own rhetoric still ringing in his ears, obsessed with the necessity (as he saw it) of squaring up to the Russians, having already been humiliated by the Bay-of-Pigs fiasco, could he really take the advice of George Ball (another "very North-Atlantic kind of man") and let South Viet Nam go? Even if he had taken the prudent advice of William Colby and the CIA and concentrated on providing assistance at a purely local level, it would still have involved an enormous American presence in Viet Nam, and sooner or later Americans would have been shot, American installations would have been blown up, by a Viet Cong who had every interest in seeing the conflict escalate. Many people suggest—Maxwell Taylor, Westmoreland, Michael Charlton himself—that the disastrous turning point came with the overthrow of the Diem régime and that the Americans committed a fatal error in "inspiring" it. But could the Americans have done anything to prevent it—if not then, then later—and should they have done? Admittedly after Diem's death the Americans could find no other focus of legitimacy that looked half so convincing. But would they have really been any better off continuing to cooperate with an autocrat who, however patriotic and well-meaning, showed something approaching a genius for alienating all basis for popular support?

What the coup against Diem did do, however, was to reduce yet further the significance of the Vietnamese themselves in the eyes of the American authorities. Few Americans ever saw themselves as simply advisers and seconds to their Vietnamese principals. Most were aching to get on with the war themselves, and the Gulf of Tonkin incident (rather cursorily examined by Michael Charlton, who presents none of the disagreeable evidence about it) gave them the chance to do so. George Ball puts the kindest gloss on this murky affair: "It was", he says, "not a conspiracy but the kind of tactical opportunity they were looking for. . . ." 1914 again: the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, as perceived in Vienna and Berlin.

ONCE THE AMERICANS DID get into the war, the Vietnamese themselves were quickly reduced to an ancillary role.

"The [American] units would come there, and

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> their commanders, for only six months or so, all anxious to accomplish something [says Westmoreland]. And there was every tendency to push the little brown men to one side: 'Let us go do it'."

There may have been some sophisticated senior officers who bore in mind that the US armed forces were engaged in that most difficult and delicate of all politico-military operations—intervention in someone else's civil war; but the awareness did not seep down very far. For most of the troops involved, those who thought about it at all, the fight was against Communism, as embodied in "the Cong." The Vietnamese people were a puzzling irrelevance who only got in the way, and had to be shifted around as strategic circumstances required. They became *objects* rather than allies. This is not unusual when there is a huge disparity of strength in an alliance: the Germans treated the Italians in much the same way in the latter stages of the Second World War. But objects can not only be pushed around: if necessary, they can be eliminated, whether in the Ardeantine Caves or the village of My Lai. And it is a great deal easier if they belong to another race.

General Westmoreland feels understandably bitter about the whole thing. There was nothing wrong with his strategy, he still insists: the fault lay with the politicians at home who failed to back him up by rallying the whole people behind the war. (The British generals of World War I, Field-Marshals Haig and Robertson, would have understood exactly how he felt.) Dean Rusk agrees:

> "We tried to do in cold blood what could only be done in hot blood, where sacrifices of this order are involved. . . ."

As to why a national campaign to whip up war-feeling was not mounted (as, after all, it was being whipped up in Hanoi) opinions differ. Westmoreland was told by McNamara and others that the Administration was afraid that if this was done "the Hawks would take over" and the war would become total. Others claim that President Lyndon Johnson was anxious not to destroy the priority of expenditure on domestic welfare and abandon his hopes of creating "the Great Society." Michael Charlton suggests, surely correctly, that such a campaign would not have united America but deeply divided it. In retrospect one can only be thankful that what was by any criterion a "limited war" to maintain American influence in a region of secondary importance to them was *not* dressed up for domestic consumption in all the trappings of a Crusade in the style of World Wars I and II.

BUT THE RESULT, according to William Small of CBS television, was that many people in America never fully understood what the United States was doing in Viet Nam anyway. "Was it to keep the Chinese from coming? Well, no one felt that the Chinese really were going to land on the shores of San Francisco. . . ." If not that, what? Popular democracies and the media that serve them are never very good at absorbing the small print of power politics. Further, the emphasis laid by the media covering the war was on the spectacular and the horrifying because, as another television executive told Michael Charlton, "this is the way to get the ratings. . . ." Whether television really had as much impact on domestic opinion as is sometimes claimed is a matter of some doubt, but certainly it did not make the Americans exactly supportive of the war. And when the Tet offensive made it clear what a long haul the war was going to be, and the military started to put in their huge and lugubrious demands for more men, with no guarantee that even these would produce "victory", Johnson (and Nixon after him) drew the appropriate conclusions. The war could be won, if it could be won at all, only by an effort which the American people were simply not prepared to make.

So the war was "re-Vietnamised", and the little brown men who had been so brusquely shouldered aside were told it was their war after all. Henry Kissinger, bombs in one hand, olive branch in the other, began the elaborate pavane of negotiations, lasting as long as the war itself, that eventually got the United States off a hook on which they left their allies firmly impaled. And the Americans came home, leaving behind a society destroyed at least as much by their generosity and good intentions as by their bombs.

WHAT CONCLUSIONS have been drawn from all this, and what conclusions should be? One result, obviously, has been a virtually unanimous determination on the part of the American people not to get committed to this kind of intervention again; a determination in which Anthony Moncrieff, who organised a similar study of the Suez affair, finds "an uncanny echo of the British lessons of 1956." It was a mood that certainly determined American decisions at the time of the Angolan civil war in 1975, when

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militarily speaking they might easily have tipped the balance in favour of UNITA and installed them in power rather than the MPLA. But then what? Would they not once again have found themselves propping up a non-viable government in a land about whose culture and society they knew virtually nothing? In general the American refusal to regard Black Africa as they regarded South-east Asia, a grey area on the map to be "defended" against the Soviet Union, but instead to pay close attention to the complex problems and aspirations of its indigenous societies, shows that the right lessons have been well learned.

But does this mean that the United States should have abstained from all intervention in Viet Nam, and should never intervene anywhere again? Is the grey totalitarian pall which has descended over that unhappy country to be accepted as the inevitable fate of the Third World, to be observed by the West with regretful resignation tempered by the assurance that sooner or later these countries will have to turn to us for technology and trade? Or was it the tactics that were at fault rather than the strategy? *If* Diem had been left alone, *if* the advice of the CIA had been taken rather than that of the Joint Chiefs, *if* the United States army had not relied on technology and fire-power but on patience and expertise in jungle-fighting, *if* priority had been given to rebuilding Vietnamese society at the grass roots, then would all have been well, and South Viet Nam have become as stable, prosperous and Western-oriented as the Philippines and Taiwan and Malaysia?

It is a fascinating question, but not one that a historian or anyone else is equipped to answer. It can be said however that success would have been possible, first, only if the United States had intervened with a full understanding of the culture and the problems of the society with which they were dealing, and of the further problems that would be occasioned by the impact of a culture so radically different from that of Viet Nam as their own; and second, if they had not regarded Viet Nam and its peoples primarily as pawns in a global game, as objects and instruments in American global policy. The extent that this *was* the attitude in Washington emerges not only from the interviews reported in this book but in every line of the *Pentagon Papers*. Such considerations of global strategy at Presidential level are inevitable and proper. But in applying them to Viet Nam, or indeed anywhere else in the world, it was necessary, not simply to "take account of local conditions", but to apply a completely different set of calculations derived from a deep knowledge of, and empathy with, the indigenous population. Given this knowledge and empathy—such as the Americans have, on the whole, with the peoples of Europe whence they derive—intervention can be productive and the requirements of global policy can be effectively implemented. But not otherwise.

This is the real lesson of Viet Nam: not that "the Third World" must be written off as a dead loss to the West, but that its peoples must be treated as peoples, not as objects and instruments. If that lesson has been thoroughly learned, the war in Viet Nam, in spite of all its horrors, may not have been fought altogether in vain.

Young Mother

Mother-
hood having surprised her
with the same stark shock as rape, she
tightens a white-knuckled hand on each knee
and balances the small
ball

of young
body in her lap. Long
lives before and after are blessed
by this sweet violation: for the rest
of her life she will be
we.

Michael Hulse

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Peter Redgrove

The British Museum Smile

None of the visitors from teeming London streets
Smiles. The deeply-lined downtrodden faces
Elbow the galleries. The sphinxes inside smile
And the colossal faces.
The face of a king with shattered legs
Smiles. And the guards smile. Their solitude
Forms into a smile and the patience
Of all the seated faces in navy uniforms
On the little chairs with the deeply-marked cushions
Smiles. They have caught it from the sphinxes
And the colossal kings and the powerful scribes
With the stone incense-bowls who smile sweetly
Over the smoky crowds. Some of the smiles
Are printed on the air from the faces of the guards,
And the stone faces have dissolved a little in the air;
Passing through and through the smiling galleries
Rubs little by little the face into a smile,
The smile of the king you pass (whose legs are sand),
The imagined absent smiles of the drenched nereids
Whose headless robes blow back against their flesh
In many folded smiles, whose smiling heads
Are museum air, the mummies
With their gasping toothy grins
Under the polite smile-paintings of their coffin-shells:
Lumbered here by ship and block and tackle
Scattering a trail of smiles; elsewhere
The nereid heads are pebbles or sand,
And who picks up the pebble smiles at its smoothness;
(And the sleek sand is made of microscopic nereid heads
Turning and kissing in the water of the tide
The smiles rubbing from quartz lip to lip
Dissolving in the sea and flying on spume;)
The mariners inhale, and smile.

Such smiles have flittered down
Like pipistrelles of Egypt on to the faces of the guards
And the smiling guards know something unknown to their crowds
Something fallen from the sphinx that patters down
To fit you as you sit still on a stool
Polishing with your back those polished stones
For twenty years, or among those polished volumes
Not reading, but learning that smile. It took
Four thousand years to teach that smile
That flutters in these galleries among the guards
Who exchange mirrored smiles across glass cases; how
Did stone first catch it, that virus smile?

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John Mole

Conversation Pieces

1. Schubert and Candles

"Yes, I'll stay", she agreed, "I mean, seeing you've laid out the table
But that'll be it, absolutely, compris, just the meal
And some brief conversation for afters. You're pretty unbearable
Aren't you—all Schubert and candles, my darling, and 'How do you feel
About us?'. Well I don't, though it never seems right at the time
To say *how* much I don't, and especially through there—in the bed—
Where I'm laid like a table—Oh Christ, what's the difference!—the wine
Turning bitter and stale on our breath as you slice up my bread."

So she stayed, yes, and so did the candles—unlit—and no music,
And all the meal long he said nothing except what he had to
Like "Is it all right?"—so subdued she expected some trick
Up his sleeve or up something at least, yet was curiously glad to
Feel nothing when, gently, his face buried deep in her hair,
She found she was kissing his fingers, then crying, then going through there.

2. Probably Not

"We should try it this time", she suggested. "Yes, really."
"On the whole, no", he replied, "I think probably not.
Look, I'm thirty-nine now and I've just about reckoned what's what
And what isn't. *This* isn't (it could have been once) quite for me."
"Bullshit", she countered, and countered so sweetly,
So young, so determined, unsmiling, he almost forgot
Who she was, and who he was, all caution, discretion, the lot
Swept away in an instant, amazing her, leaving him free.

What a word can achieve, though, one more, be it known, can undo.
"Well, *perhaps*", he conceded, "but shouldn't we, as it were, wait?"
"Oh Jesus!" was all she could manage. "Oh hey nonny no!"
"And that's just what I thought you would say", he said, "something like that."
So again it was over, as usual, was over, but "See you"
They said when they parted, not coldly, as if they still might.

3. Passing North

"My God, is it you?" he exclaimed, as she stood in the doorway
Not looking at him but the Cotman they'd bought after Norwich
And she didn't take though he'd offered. "I mean, can you stay?
Would you like to? How long? Why? Who are you with? Which
Hotel? . . ." and she still wasn't looking at him but the love-spoon
They'd picked up in Wales the next day and she hadn't packed either
But coveted now, just a little, this cold afternoon
Passing north on her own—well, who bothered?—to live there or die there.

He could have said more to the point like "Why didn't you write?"
But he didn't, and what was the point of it now? After all
It was years since he'd thought of her much, bless her heart; out of sight
Out of mind. Oh, that painting? That spoon? Absorbed by the wall—
How seldom he noticed them, then he did notice—at last—it was him
She was looking at, smiling a little: "Well, shall I come in?"

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NOTHING COULD PLEASE me more, as a native-born and speaking Welshman, than my countrymen's root-and-branch rejection of Mr Callaghan's offer of a form of devolution which they neither demanded nor desired. The Welsh are in many ways a curious and difficult people. They have a deep love of poetry and song, and an addiction to rhetoric which often make Englishmen wonder whether they are to be taken seriously, except perhaps on the Rugby field. But beneath their more exhibitionist attitudes there lies a fund of common sense which makes them a difficult people to deceive and stands them in good stead in the practical affairs of life. It might be said that few peoples have succeeded so well in combining poetry with pragmatism, sometimes in ways which may strike others as coming very near to hypocrisy.

It is perhaps a sign of how little Mr Callaghan (though he sits for a Welsh constituency) understands the nature of the Welsh people that he should have thought for a moment they would be taken in by the sham version of autonomy and devolution which they have rejected with the contempt which it deserves. Not that Mr Callaghan and his colleagues are likely to be unduly perturbed by this, except in so far as it tends to make them look rather foolish. Their offer of devolution to Wales was in no kind of way actuated by any genuine care or concern for the well-being or future of the Welsh people. It was merely an element, and a minor and subsidiary one, in a squalid political and electoral manoeuvre by which the Labour Party has tried to secure its industrial strongholds in the Celtic fringes of these islands against what they have rightly or wrongly assumed to be the rising tide of nationalist feeling in Wales and Scotland. Perhaps it was because the Welsh so clearly perceived the manoeuvre for what it was that they refused to be taken in by it.

If Mr Callaghan is indeed perturbed at all by the result of the referendum in Wales, it will not be out of any concern for the Welsh people, but because the referendum campaign itself has created within the Labour Party in Wales stresses and strains which even he will find it hard to reconcile and overcome before the time comes, not now so very distant, when he will at length have to face a general election, with, he hopes, a united party behind him. This particular difficulty he will have to take seriously, because it represents a threat to what the Labour Party have been accustomed to take for granted as an unchallengeable monopoly of political power in the industrial areas of Wales. But this is a problem which Mr Callaghan and the Labour Party must solve for themselves. The Welsh people have certainly given them no help or encouragement in doing so.

SCOTLAND, of course, is a very different matter, not merely because of the very real historical and temperamental differences between the Scots and the Welsh, but because the result of the referendum in Scotland has been inconclusive enough for all the parties involved, including the Labour Party, the Scottish Labour Party, the Scottish Nationalist Party, the Liberals, and even the Ulster Unionist Party under Mr Enoch Powell's leadership, to draw from it whatever practical conclusions seem most conducive to their own profit and advantage.

Yet any rational and objective interpretation of the result would not appear to lend any kind of justification to the introduction of a major and fundamental change in the future constitutional relationship between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. That such a change, which would affect England and Wales no less than Scotland itself, should rest on no stronger a foundation than one-third of the Scottish electorate seems to argue an attitude to the issues involved which borders on either recklessness or desperation, and it seems very hard to believe that any responsible British government, with a proper sense of the national interest, would engage on such a course.

Unfortunately, however, one has to remember, once again, that, in Scotland as in Wales, the Government's Devolution strategy has very little to do with the future welfare of its peoples or, indeed, of the English themselves. It rests quite simply and crudely on the necessity, in the Government's view, of protecting its industrial strongholds in Scotland from the raids, forays and incursions of the Scottish Nationalist Party. In this belief, of course, they may prove in the end, or even in the near future, to have been totally mistaken. But in that case, it only adds yet another element of confusion to the Scottish political scene, which the government has already reduced to a condition which threatens to become unmanageable.

THAT THE ATTITUDE of the British government to the constitutional future of the United Kingdom should have been determined by such purely party electoral considerations seems to argue a degree of cynicism with which it is hard to credit even Mr Callaghan and his colleagues. Yet we know perfectly well by now that there is hardly any

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sacrifice of policy or principle which they would not make so long as, like Mr Micawber, they can continue to believe that something will turn up to improve their present political fortunes, or at least guarantee their continuance in office for the remainder of the present Parliament. At the present moment, immediately after the referendum, all the available evidence and all the comments of the best informed political observers seem to point irresistibly to the conclusion that we shall now witness, within Parliament and outside it, a complicated process of political wheeling-and-dealing by which the Government, having failed to achieve its primary object as a result of the referendum, will now attempt to do so by other means; that is to say, by a series of elaborate, meaningless, and frequently self-contradictory political bargains, compromises, and concessions sufficient to guarantee its continued existence.

If such indeed is the case it will not be a pleasant or an edifying spectacle; particularly at a time when the United Kingdom as a whole is faced by difficulties which increasingly impose on all its citizens degrees of inconvenience and discomfort which in many cases amount to real and genuine hardship. To such difficulties the convolutions and complications of the Government's devolutionary policies have for some months become increasingly irrelevant. Yet all the signs are that for the immediate future it is they which will increasingly occupy its attention.

TO CONDEMN THE MOTIVES for which the Government has endeavoured to impose on Wales and Scotland a form of devolution which is undesired by the great majority of their people is by no means to say that all forms of devolution are equally undesired by them. Both Scotland and Wales have legitimate and justified grievances and complaints against the manner in which they have been governed or misgoverned by the Parliament at Westminster, both in the past and in the present. In both countries such reasons for discontent will continue to be nourished and sharpened by those differences of character and temperament which will persist as long as Scotsmen are Scots and Welshmen Welsh. The problems to which such differences give rise will not simply go away because Mr Callaghan has so conspicuously failed to solve them nor will they be conjured out of existence by the manipulation, however ingenious, of minority and splinter groups in Parliament.

Yet such grounds for complaint by no means cancel or counterbalance the advantages which the peoples of the United Kingdom have derived and continue to derive from their close association with each other, and the referendum results have shown that this is as apparent to the peoples of Scotland and Wales as to anyone else. And secondly, Scottish and Welsh grounds for discontent and dissatisfaction are to a large degree shared by all the diverse and varied regions and areas of England itself, which in many cases differ as much from each other as they do from either Scotland or Wales. But each of them, equally with Scotland and Wales, now suffers under a system of national and local misgovernment which for complexity, incompetence, and wastefulness has rarely been paralleled in our history, and if the discontents of Wales and Scotland are to be cured at all it will only be by means which will bring equal relief to the English themselves. The growth of nationalist feeling in Scotland and Wales is a function not so much of any desire to dissociate themselves from the English, but far rather of the continued decline in recent years of the Westminster Parliament's capacity for efficient and effective government. It is a reflection of the feeling of many Scotsmen and Welshmen that they can do better for themselves today than the English can.

As a Welshman who shares the feelings of his fellow countrymen, I have often felt tempted to say to the English that if they genuinely wished to help us in curing our present ills, they would do so best by curing themselves first—because the ills from which they suffer are for the most part the ills which we share with them, and in particular the ills consequent on a form of government which is so grossly over-centralised at Westminster that it can scarcely administer itself, much less the rest of the country, whether English, Welsh, or Scottish. What is required is not so much devolution for Scotland or Wales as such, but measures of devolution which would apply to the United Kingdom as a whole, for in this all its associated peoples share an urgent and a common interest.

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THE WORLD AT THE MOMENT is so filled with a multitude of doom-watchers, rightly concerned with the problems of nuclear warfare, of the pollution of the earth's surface and atmosphere, and the exhaustion of its natural resources, that for an increasing number of people the only rational attitude is to await with resignation an end which cannot be put off much longer. Such an attitude has its own particular dangers, because it diminishes men's capacity for the determined and resolute action which is required if such problems are indeed ever to be solved. In such a situation it may be of some comfort and help, and a stimulus to the instinct for survival, if we remember that there have been periods in men's history when the prospect before them seemed just as black and threatening as it does today, and in some respects even more so.

We may perhaps find some such comfort in

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reading Barbara Tuchman's new book, *A Distant Mirror*.[1] Mrs Tuchman of course is something of a specialist in disaster; her name will be known to thousands of readers all over the world as the author of a remarkable book, *August 1914*, which is probably the best comprehensive account we have of Europe on the eve of one of the greatest catastrophes in her history. In her new book, however, it is not to the modern but to the medieval world that Mrs Tuchman has directed her attention, but in such a way as to make it seem as relevant to our own day as anything that has happened in modern times. For she has chosen as her subject what she describes in her sub-title as *The Calamitous 14th Century*, in which mankind was struck by a series of disasters which at least equalled, and perhaps even exceeded, the darkest and gloomiest of all our modern forebodings, including the nightmares inspired by the possibilities of nuclear war.

In the middle of that terrible century, in 1347, an event occurred which was taken quite literally by many people as heralding the end of the world. In that year Genoese trading ships put into the port of Messina in Sicily which were manned by crews who were dead or dying at their oars. They carried with them the Black Death, or bubonic plague, which occurred in two forms, one spread by contact, the other by respiratory infection. The arrival of these dreadful death-ships had been preceded earlier by rumours of a terrible plague arising in China, Central Asia, India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Asia Minor. It was said that in India there were entire regions covered by dead bodies, while in some areas not a single person was left alive.

When the plague reached Europe it struck with equal deadliness and virulence. No one will ever know how many deaths it actually accounted for; but the best calculations of modern demographers tend to show that it killed one-third of the population living between India and Iceland, thus confirming the succinct statement of the great medieval chronicler, Froissart: "One third of the world died. . . ."

This is a figure to chill the blood even of those who accept the worst predictions of the likely effect of an atomic war, especially since death by the plague took place in circumstances of almost unimaginable horror and abomination. Nor was the Black Death the only, though by far the greatest, disaster which struck mankind during Mrs Tuchman's century of calamities. They included the longest war in history, between England and France, lasting for a hundred years; famine and peasant uprisings accompanied by appalling outbreaks of savagery and brutality; universal freebooting and brigandage; an almost total breakdown over huge areas of civil government. Nor were the evils visited on men merely material; they were spiritual also, in an age when faith was the only thing which most men had to sustain them in their miseries. The Church was rent by schism, and the Vicar of God, the Pope himself, lived in Babylonian exile in Avignon, in circumstances of outrageous luxury, pomp, and corruption which were a scandal and offence to the whole of Christendom.

Indeed, there seems no end to the list of calamities which Mrs Tuchman has to recount, with a wealth and vividness of detail which bring them home to us even today. It was as if for an entire century all Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse had been given a free rein to inflict on mankind every misery that could be imagined and this indeed is the image in which many men regarded the condition into which they had fallen.

AND YET THE MIRACLE IS, of course, that men did indeed survive, and what is more even in their greatest travail created some of the greatest works both of art and of intellect the world has known. How this could be possible is one of those questions to which history can never give us any satisfactory answer, but perhaps the mere possibility is a kind of reassurance against despair. To those oppressed by the evils of the age through which we ourselves have had to live I would heartily recommend Mrs Tuchman's fascinating book, and especially perhaps the quotation from Dryden with which she prefaces it: "For mankind is ever the same and nothing is lost out of nature though everything is altered."

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[1] *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century*. By BARBARA W. TUCHMAN. Macmillan, £9.95.

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Martin Buber

Of His Failures & Triumph—By WALTER KAUFMANN

MARTIN BUBER'S many-sidedness distinguished him even in his own time. In 1978, on the hundredth anniversary of his birth, such variety had become an outright anomaly. Specialisation has grown rapidly during the 20th century, especially since the Second World War. No religious writer today invites comparison with Martin Buber—no Jew, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, or Muslim. We may feel that religion and perhaps also philosophy are the poorer for that; or we may wonder whether there are not good reasons for the increase in specialisation; or both. In any case, to gain an understanding of Buber, we should recall not only particular themes in his work but also the whole man.

When Buber was in his eighties, he collected his works in three volumes, devoting each volume to one of his central concerns. In the first volume he collected his writings on philosophy, in the second his writings on the Bible, and in the last his writings on Hasidism. Simultaneously, another publisher brought out, also in German, his essays and lectures on *Der Jude und sein Judentum* ("The Jew and His Judaism"). Even these four tomes do not represent the whole of his work. We must add to them the four volumes that contain his German translation of the Hebrew Bible.

His major writings, then, by which he wished to be remembered can be found in eight volumes which span five major concerns. Yet we must add a sixth dimension, for Buber was not only a writer but also a teacher, and what was best in his teaching was not necessarily the content of his lectures that survives in print. He was, at least part of the time, a charismatic teacher who impressed his listeners profoundly during informal sessions and during the discussions that sometimes followed his lectures. On such occasions the point was less to communicate knowledge than it was to change the participants in the dialogue.

At the very least, then, we must distinguish six major endeavours: translating the Bible, writing about the Bible, about Hasidism, about Jewishness and Zionism, philosophy, and dialogical teaching. But it would be better to add a seventh project. Even as we must distinguish Buber's translation of the Bible from his more or less scholarly writings about the Bible, we should also distinguish Buber's more or less scholarly writings about the Hasidim from his one-volume collection of their tales and his novel *Gog and Magog* (1949).

HIS MANY-SIDEDNESS should be plain by now. Buber confronts us with an imposing and multi-dimensional achievement that has won him countless admirers. If one is satisfied with what Kierkegaard called the aesthetic orientation—that is, if one is content to pay homage to what is profound and beautiful, but *ganz unverbindlich*, without incurring any obligation, merely as a spectator who enjoys a diversion applauds, and goes home—then one has an easy time of it. There is much in Buber that is profound and beautiful, and it is a pleasure to express one's gratitude for that. But Buber presumably did not write or teach in order to win gratitude or appreciation. A serious author and teacher is no mere entertainer; his aim transcends applause; he wants to make an enduring difference. To be appreciated is child's play compared to that.

We must ask to what extent Buber succeeded in what he tried to do. This is an uncomfortable question and therefore mostly avoided. It brings us face to face with Buber's failures.

WE SHOULD FACE UP to them to learn something not only about Buber but also about success and failure and what it means to be human. The failures that concern us here are not mistakes; it is not as if Buber had taken examinations and failed them. The most devastating failures in life are different. We set our own goals, and those who aim low enough often succeed; those who aim at applause often get it; those who aim to win riches often do. Buber's goals were exceptionally ambitious. Even taken

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singly, his aims were extraordinarily high, making success unlikely from the beginning. But Buber did not confine himself to one or two of these aims. I have distinguished seven major endeavours and I want to consider them one by one, not in a censorious spirit but recalling the splendid line in Goethe's *Faust:*

Den lieb ich, der unmögliches begehrt.
(I love him who desires the impossible.)

IN ALL OF his seven major endeavours Buber accomplished a great deal and came nowhere near total failure. Consider his Bible translation. The first volume appeared in 1926; by 1933 there were twelve volumes, and when Buber left Germany in 1938, fifteen. For almost two decades this was probably his most quixotic undertaking. It tells us a great deal about the state of German Jewry in the 1930s that Buber's continued work on his German translation was not considered grotesque. The strange style that Buber (and Franz Rosenzweig) developed for this project was criticised, and many people preferred Torczyner's version, which also appeared in Germany in the 1930s. But the need for a new German Bible was felt intensely at that time. Thousands of Jews in Germany went back to reading the Bible and did not know Hebrew enough to study it in the original; and many turned to Buber's version.

When the War ended, scarcely any Jews were left in Germany, and Buber might have written off this undertaking as a noble failure. Yet a German publisher asked him to finish the project, and Buber began by revising what he had done years ago, before he completed the remaining books, and the whole translation was finally finished in 1962, almost forty years after it was begun. During his last years Buber kept revising his German Bible, enabling his son to publish in 1976 the ninth edition, again revised and improved, of the new edition of 1954 of Buber's German *Torah*, and the fourth revised edition of the new edition of 1962 of the *Schriftwerke (Ktuvim)*. Obviously there is a market though it does not consist of the readers whom Buber and Rosenzweig had had in mind when they started "*In the beginning.*" The culture that this translation was meant to change has perished. In an important sense this undertaking was a tragic failure.

The German Jews who survived the War are widely scattered. Few of those living in Israel read the Bible in German, and of those who went elsewhere some no longer read the Bible at all while others no longer have enough German to wrestle with Buber's version which was never meant to be read without effort. It was meant to be studied by people who wished to "learn Bible" (and I still recall Buber talking about "*Bibel lernen*" in 1934). I do not know *who* reads Buber's version in Germany in the 1970s, or *how* it is read. That it keeps being read is surely a triumph.

Buber's way of translating, which owes a great deal to Rosenzweig, has many roots in Germany and invites comparison with Rudolf Borchardt, whose translations have had even less influence, and with Martin Heidegger, whose versions of the Greek materials he quotes have found many imitators among German academics. But all such comparisons only redound to Buber's credit. While Heidegger insisted that an interpreter must use "violence" and made a practice of ripping short texts from their context, Buber paid more attention to the context than previous translators and tried to teach respect for the distinctive voice of the original. Far from concentrating merely on fragmentary quotations, like Heidegger, Buber always felt a responsibility to the Hebrew Bible as a whole. He insisted that we must ask where else a word occurs. Though there may be few who have learned from this approach to translation, I am one of them and am glad to acknowledge my debt to Buber and Rosenzweig.

Buber's way has not prevailed. Publishers still press translators to give them easily readable versions that are idiomatic, and any profound concern for the original voice is equally rare in prose and in poetry. While I often prefer other versions to Buber's, it was Buber who taught me to listen for the original voice; and if he failed to impress this lesson on many others, I cannot help feeling that it was better to stand for noble principles than to adopt a more popular position and have more influence.

BUBER'S WRITINGS *about* the Bible present a similar picture. His books on the kingship of God, Moses, and the faith of the prophets have not become standard works and have not succeeded in redirecting Biblical scholarship. Scholars have largely ignored his Biblical studies, which are considered excessively impressionistic and personal. Yet much that was more highly regarded when Buber's studies appeared has by now been forgotten. Buber remains.

BUBER ON "The Jew and his Judaism" can be seen as another failure. He was one of the leading Zionists of his time but stayed in Germany until 1938; and when he finally went to Palestine he never gained anything like the influence that he had had on the German Jews in the 1930s. In Palestine he was—and in Israel he remained—a marginal figure. Yet the writings in which he developed concepts of Zionism and of Judaism different from the more widely accepted ones still confront us. Some

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of the Hebrew prophets were failures, too; but their writings still haunt humanity.

Success is no proof of virtue, nor is failure. But we come nowhere near an understanding of Buber if we ignore the brute fact of his repeated failures. The Judaism and the Zionism that he espoused have not gained wide acceptance. The culture that has developed and the policies that are espoused in Israel today are not what Buber had hoped for.

One might have thought that as a teacher Buber must have had a great impact. It is surprising how little he changed most of the listeners who sat at his feet in Germany, Israel, and the United States. Of course, he did make a profound difference in the lives of a few, but it is sad how few eminent men and women were changed by being his students. Was Buber's insistence on personal contact misguided? Can even a charismatic teacher accomplish little in person?

Counter-examples abound. Some charismatic teachers have had many followers who became teachers in their own right and wrote books. Ludwig Wittgenstein did, for example, but as one talks to people who knew him one gains the impression that he may have considered his disciples proof of his failure. Nor did Buber envy Martin Heidegger *his* followers.

It may be objected that one can teach a method, which is true. Freud certainly did; yet he said to Binswanger, who came from Switzerland to visit him and attended one of the evening sessions of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society: "*So, haben Sie jetzt diese Bande gesehen!* (Well, have you seen these gangsters now?").[1]

Craftsmen can teach many students their craft. Teachers whose stature is inseparable from their individuality will often have a wide appeal but cannot hope to turn out many students who have much in common with them. Followers of widely different teachers usually have more in common with each other than they do with their masters.[2] And if the disciples emulate their master and he retains his integrity, he will probably feel as Freud did.

Buber's failure as a teacher is poignant but not accidental; it is a corollary of the kind of man he was. And it may remind us that no major modern philosopher could point to students he had taught as some measure of his success. The greatest philosophers from Descartes to Hume did not teach philosophy. Kant was the first great philosopher of modern times who was also a professor, and he taught only one student who became a major figure: Herder. But when Herder published a major philosophical work, Kant reviewed it disparagingly,[3] and later on Herder published a two-volume attack on Kant.[4] Hegel had some remarkable students, but those who became philosophers in their own right, like Ludwig Feuerbach, did not remain Hegelians. Some of Schelling's lectures in Berlin were attended by Engels, Bakunin, and Kierkegaard, but he would surely have felt dismayed by all of them.

In sum, no great philosopher of modern times was a successful teacher in the sense that he turned out disciples who carried on and developed his work. But whether Buber was a great philosopher is, of course, another question.

BUBER CONFRONTS posterity as, above all, a philosopher. The most important book about him bears the title *The Philosophy of Martin Buber;*[5] he himself contributed to it. And most people would say, if asked to identify him, that he was a Jewish philosopher. He himself considered *I and Thou* his most important book, and he saw it as his contribution to philosophy.

In some ways *I and Thou* has been a great success. Tens of thousands of students still read it year after year in the USA alone, and philosophers keep writing articles and books about it. The books differ widely but have one thing in common: all are many times as long as *I and Thou*. To be sure, interest in Buber's *I and Thou* is not confined to philosophers and philosophy students. The first English version of the book was the work of a Christian clergyman, and it has long enjoyed a marked popularity among Protestant theologians.

We have finally reached a drastic reversal. In the areas where Buber failed to have as wide an impact as he might have wished we could say that this may actually be to his credit. Conversely, the relative popularity of *I and Thou* is not necessarily to its credit. It is a flawed work and owes its success not least to its timely failings.

The most obvious of these is the style, which is affected rather than ruthlessly honest. To compare it with *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran, which was published the very same year (1923) and has enjoyed an enormous success, might be too unkind; but both books are influenced by the pose of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* without remotely approaching its riches or its irony. Authenticity is not everything, and the very category of authenticity is simplistic. Nietzsche, for example, used masks and knew and said that he did. But the inauthenticity of

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[1] Ludwig Binswanger, *Erinnerungen an Sigmund Freud* (1956), p. 13.

[2] See §21, "Followers", in Walter Kaufmann, *Critique of Religion and Philosophy* (1958).

[3] *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (4 vols, 1784-91). Kant reviewed volume 1 in *Jenaische Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* (4 January 1785).

[4] *Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1799).

[5] Ed. P. A. Schilpp and M. Friedman (LaSalle, Ill., 1967).

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Buber's *I and Thou* is a serious flaw in a book that *is* simplistic. We are confronted by a pose without any redeeming wit or irony; it approximates the oracular tone of false prophets.

It is not fashionable to pay attention to style in philosophy, but as long as we do not we cannot fully understand a philosopher. Kant or Hegel, Nietzsche or Heidegger in another style would no longer be the same men. For better or worse, their philosophy and their language belong together. Those who think of philosophy as a science may wish to deny this, but Buber himself never considered language as merely accidental and external but attached immense importance to it.[6] Hence the note of falseness in *I and Thou* cannot be discounted; it is a warning sign.

Discussing *I and Thou* in his "Replies to My Critics" at the end of *The Philosophy of Martin Buber,* he claimed to have written the book

> "under the spell of an irresistible enthusiasm. And the inspiration of such enthusiasm one may not change any more, not even for the sake of exactness. For one can only estimate what one would gain, but not what would be lost."[7]

Although Nietzsche had not paused to revise his *Zarathustra,* he did revise his other books before publication. On 8 December 1888, less than a month before his final breakdown, Nietzsche wrote Peter Gast that he had returned the manuscript of *Ecce Homo* to the publisher "the day before yesterday after laying it once more on the gold scales from the first to the last word to set my conscience finally at rest."[8] Such scrupulous weighing of every word was not in fashion in 1923 when *I and Thou* first appeared. Nor was the point Nietzsche made in section 319 of *The Gay Science* popular:[9]

> "One sort of honesty has been alien to all founders of religions and their kind: They have never made their experiences a matter of conscience for knowledge, 'What did I really experience? What happened in me and around me at that time? Was my reason bright enough . . . .' But we, we others who thirst after reason, are determined to scrutinise our experiences as severely as a scientific experiment—hour after hour, day after day. We ourselves wish to be our experiments and guinea pigs."

It was also in 1923 that Rilke published both his *Duino Elegies* and his *Sonnets to Orpheus.* In a letter from Muzot (11 February 1922) he claimed that both had been written "in a few days, it was a nameless gale, a hurricane in the mind."[10] There was much in these volumes that belongs with the best verse ever written in German; and yet, as any reader of Rilke's letters knows even if it goes unnoticed in Rilke's poetry, he was addicted to poses, and one often encounters a disturbing note of falseness in his letters.

In Heidegger, who wrote *Being and Time* in the 1920s, this falseness is more pronounced and took a different, much more scholastic but no less oracular form. Walter Benjamin's affectations and obscurantism were different again but equally palpable. We should reject the claim that "the inspiration of such enthusiasm one may not change any more, not even for the sake of exactness . . . ." Even in poetry that is not true, and in philosophy it is quite unacceptable. Goethe kept revising the products of his inspiration, including the original versions of his *Iphigenie* and *Faust,* and did not even take pains to preserve the text of the *Urfaust,* which was discovered only in 1887 in a copy made by someone else. It is arguable that in places the *Urfaust* is preferable to the final version, but a truly inspired writer will not shrink from the experiment of rewriting and will try to see what can be improved, unless the first draft seems more or less perfect. Those who keep having intuitions, hunches, and inspirations can afford to be ruthless with themselves, while the writer who has been under the spell of an irresistible enthusiasm only once will naturally guard its fruit more anxiously.

WAS, THEN, *I and Thou* more or less perfect? Is it credible that the reason for not changing anything was that it could have been changed only for the worse? Surely, the central dichotomy of the book did not bear close examination. Buber refused to go over his text critically, feeling, if only dimly, that genuine self-criticism might have required him to abandon the central idea.

It is not true—and this is the crux of my criticism—that a genuine relationship to another human being can be achieved only in brief encounters from which we must always relapse into states in which the other human being becomes for us merely an object of experience and use. If one takes this dichotomy seriously and identifies with the person who championed it instead of treating it scholastically, one realises that it reveals a deep existential malaise both in the writer and in the young people who clasp his book to their bosoms. In Buber's case one can scarcely resist the surmise that he was permanently damaged by his mother's abandonment of him when he was a small child.

My relationship to students who come to ask me

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[6] See, e.g., *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung* (1936), p. 137: "As if a genuine message . . . contained a What that could be detached without any damage from its How; as if the spirit of a speech could be discovered anywhere else than in its linguistic body . . . ."

[7] P. 706; p. 604 of the German ed.; my translation.

[8] See W. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche* (4th ed., 1974), p. 435.

[9] Translated, with Commentary, by Walter Kaufmann (New York, 1974).

[10] Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot* (1937).

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something—and to other partners in a conversation, whether a man or woman in a store or Ernst Simon or Gershom Scholem—is not punctuated by brief moments of genuine encounter. Neither—and this is crucial—do I confront them as mere objects of experience or use. Precisely if they matter much to me, I also find myself reflecting *about* them, sometimes in an effort to understand better how they feel and think. Such thoughts are not a fall from grace, a relapse into inauthenticity, or a betrayal to be atoned for only in another ecstasy.

Some of the photographs which I have published may help to show what I mean.[11] When I photograph a person—and most of my photographs of people are of poor men, women, and children whose names I do not know—they become objects of experience for me, but most certainly not merely objects. The ethos of the photographs is to reveal the "You."

Think of some of the most eloquent Rembrandt portraits, like that of his mother in Vienna or that of his father in Boston, the two of Margaretha Trip in London, or the Woman Holding a Carnation in New York, and ask whether the following passage from *I and Thou* stands up.[12] These paragraphs summarise what is said repeatedly elsewhere:

> "This, however, is the sublime melancholy of our lot that every You must become an It in our world. However exclusively present it may have been in the direct relationship—as soon as the relationship has run its course or is permeated by *means*, the You becomes an object among objects, possibly the noblest one and yet one of them, assigned its measure and boundary. The actualisation of the work involves a loss of actuality. Genuine contemplation never lasts long; the natural being that only now revealed itself to me in the mystery of reciprocity has again become describable, analysable, classifiable—the point at which manifold systems of laws intersect. And even love cannot persist in direct relation; it endures, but only in the alternation of actuality and latency. The human being who but now was unique and devoid of qualities, not at hand but only present, not experienceable, only touchable, has again become a He or She, an aggregate of qualities, a quantum with a shape. Now I can again abstract from him the color of his hair, of his speech, of his graciousness; but as long as I can do that he is my You no longer and not yet again.
>
> Every You in the world is doomed by its nature to become a thing or at least to enter into thinghood again and again. In the language of objects: every thing in the world can—either before or after it becomes a thing—appear to some I as its You. But the language of objects catches only one corner of actual life.
>
> The It is the chrysalis, the You the butterfly. Only it is not always as if these states took turns so neatly; often it is an intricately entangled series of events that is tortuously dual."

To be painted or photographed, "You must become an It in our world", and the portrait is, of course, "an object among objects." But does seeing the portrait involve a fall into the realm of the "describable, analysable, classifiable" and a loss of the "You"? Is a "He" or "She" necessarily an "It", that is "an aggregate of qualities, a quantum with a shape"? On the contrary, I can look at a portrait of an old man or woman, mindful that this human being is old, and feel addressed by him or her, knowing that this is a "He" or a "She" while not at all admitting that "Every You in the world is doomed by its nature to become a thing."

To be sure, Buber himself says that "every thing in the world can . . . appear to some I as its You", and this obviously includes portraits as well as van Gogh's paintings of flowers and trees. But the painter does not lapse from the genuine I-You relationship into a deplorable attitude in which he notes the colour of the hair or other qualities, reducing the You to a mere It. On the contrary, he must pay some attention to qualities and details to reveal the You on the canvas. It is not "the sublime melancholy of our lot" that we cannot help thinking about the You that confronts us. Those who refuse to do this live in illusions and cultivate a relationship to an idol instead of truly confronting a You.

THERE IS A Manichaean strain in *I and Thou* that is unworthy of Buber, and he himself might have eliminated it if he had been more severe with the child of his inspiration. His faults here are of one piece. In line wih his Manichaean denigration of the I-It and his unduly romantic and ecstatic notion of the I-Thou, he refused to treat his brainchild as a good painter treats one of his paintings or as Goethe treated his poetry (even *Faust*), subjecting it to rigorous criticism until it becomes the better for that. Buber mistook intense emotion for revelation and did not realise how much rational reflection is needed if we really want to encounter the You rather than an illusion.

If ever a great artist worked under the spell of ecstasy and inspiration, it was Vincent van Gogh. Of his high emotional tension and total, self-sacrificing devotion there can be no doubt, yet his copious letters show how far he was from regarding the fruits of his inspiration as sacrosanct. Even

[11] Walter Kaufmann, *Religions in Four Dimensions* (New York, 1976); also the trilogy *Man's Lot* (New York, 1978), especially the third part, *What is Man?*

[12] Buber, *I and Thou* (a New Translation with a Prologue "I and You" and Notes by W. Kaufmann, (1970), p. 68f.

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when committed to an asylum, he never lost or disparaged his critical powers. He discussed his paintings as well as his situation with a rarely equalled lucidity that furnishes a really startling contrast to Buber. Freud's and Kafka's letters are equally free of falseness, pretence, and murkiness.

All three men—van Gogh, Kafka, and Freud—were distinguished by a capacity for detachment from themselves so as to see themselves from above.

It is really not surprising that Rilke liked Buber's books while Freud and Kafka did not; but the vehemence of Kafka's dislike *is* astonishing. In January 1918 he wrote Max Brod what he thought of

> "Buber's last books. Revolting, repulsive [*Abscheuliche, widerwärtige*] books, all three of them."[13]

Yet only three days after Kafka had written his friend, Felice, on 16 January 1913, that he had heard Buber lecture and "he makes a dreary impression on me; everything he says lacks something", Kafka wrote to her: "Yesterday I also spoke with Buber, who is in person fresh and simple and remarkable [*bedeutend*] and seems to have nothing to do with the lukewarm things he has written."[14] But this did not change his view of Buber's books, and only a day or two later he wrote Felice that he found Buber's reworking of the tales of Rabbi Nachman (1906) and the Baalshem (1908) "insufferable."

Many others, including Gershom Scholem who described much the same ambivalence in his autobiographical book, *Von Berlin nach Jerusalem* (Frankfurt, 1977), felt that in person, though not necessarily when he was lecturing, Buber was truly impressive, but that the tone of some of his writings was affected and not genuine. His later treatment of Hasidic materials was very different from his first two efforts, but in *Ich und Du* his affectation was, I think, especially disturbing. My fundamental criticism, however, does not concern Buber's style but his claim that

> "Every You in the world is doomed by its nature to become a thing or at least to enter into thinghood again and again."

This unacceptable claim was meant to prepare the ground for the eternal You or God of whom Buber said in the last part of the book

> "Only one You never ceases, in accordance with its nature to be You for us."

I HESITATE TO COMPARE Buber with other philosophers because he so clearly differed from them. But something needs to be said in his defence. In the 1920s when "authenticity" became a watchword in philosophy, authenticity actually declined. One might suppose that it declined first and that the philosophers then called attention to this *malaise*. But the melancholy fact is that precisely those who made the most of it exhibited nothing short of a cultivated inauthenticity. Compared to some of the others—Adorno and Benjamin, Heidegger and Sartre (in his philosophic books)—Buber remained relatively clear, and certainly unambiguous in his stand against totalitarianism from both the Right and the Left. *The Jargon of Authenticity*[15] may well be one of the best things Adorno ever wrote; it contains a splendid attack on Heidegger; but Adorno evidently failed to notice how much of this critique was applicable to himself.

The whole complex of problems relating to authenticity is too vast to be unravelled here. What should be said is that Buber ought to be compared with his contemporaries; and he fares better as a philosopher when we do that than he does when we measure him against major thinkers of the past, like Kant, Hegel, or Nietzsche.

THIS CRITIQUE of *I and Thou* is corroborated by Buber's correspondence with Rosenzweig (published in 1973).[16] In September 1922 Rosenzweig wrote Buber after reading the first instalment of the printer's proofs of *I and Thou* that he found the central dichotomy of the book unacceptable. "With the I-It you give the I-You a cripple as an opponent." Rosenzweig then introduced God as *Er* ("He") and reproached Buber for his undue "narrowing down to the I-You."

In his reply of September 14, Buber told Rosenzweig of his plans for volumes II through V,[17] and five days later he wrote Rosenzweig that *I and Thou*

> "is after all not a whole but a scanty and rough beginning and yet must go out into the world like that. The second volume, on which I am working hard and which . . . is to be called, non-

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[13] Franz Kafka, *Briefe 1902–1924* (1958), p. 224.

[14] Franz Kafka, *Briefe an Felice* (1967), pp.252ff. Cf. Kafka's letter to Buber, 29 November, 1915. In Martin Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten* (ed. Grete Schaeder, vol. I, 1972), he fondly recalls the afternoon he spent with Buber almost two years before—"in every respect the purest memory I retain of Berlin, and it has often been a kind of refuge for me."

[15] T. W. Adorno, *Der Jargon der Eigentlichkeit* (1964), *The Jargon of Authenticity* (1973).

[16] Grete Schaeder, *Briefwechsel*, vol. II.

[17] Buber's outline of the five-volume project was first published in facsimile and English translation in my version of *I and Thou* (1970), pp. 49f. Cf. Schaeder, vol. I (1972), p. 73. Yet Buber's admirers have for the most part ignored the fact that *I and Thou* was the first volume of a work Buber abandoned.

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> religiously [*religionslos*], *Holy Action*, will become simpler and more transparent, it seems to me."

But the second volume never appeared any more than the third, fourth, and fifth, for Buber could not build on the foundation he had laid.

Against Rosenzweig's criticism one could cite passages in which the I-It does not seem to be a cripple, but in his letter of September 22 Rosenzweig himself replied:

> "Yes, the It receives its full rights in a few places, but that is not to your credit but to its own, for these passages fall out of the line of your thought."

My concern in any case is not to eulogise the I-It but rather to insist that it is false that every You except for God must again and again become a mere thing for us. To be sure, we are not eternal, and in death we become dust and ashes; but as long as I live the dead whom I love are not mere things for me; and thanks to Rembrandt's art his father and mother are not mere things for me either. Nor are Buber and Rosenzweig. They still address me, and I am not trying to score points but rather to respond to them.

I am much closer to Buber's more humanistic orientation than to Rosenzweig's philosophical theology. But Rosenzweig was Buber's close friend and an extraordinarily perceptive reader. He questioned Buber's central contrast of the I-You and I-It before *I and Thou* was published. Buber kept insisting that after all this was only the first volume; a few weeks later (as Buber reported on 10 February) 2,000 copies had been sold, and Buber, though he kept considering *I and Thou* his major contribution to philosophy, abandoned the project of which it had been meant to be no more than a scanty beginning.

Two dimensions of Buber's work remain for brief discussion: his writings on Hasidism and his collections of Hasidic lore. It is now widely acknowledged that Buber's portrait of Hasidism does not stand up under scholarly scrutiny; it was rather partisan and impressionistic. Far from being in a position to dispute this verdict, I can only say that this was surely obvious from the beginning. Buber's Hasidim bore little resemblance to any Hasidim to be found anywhere nowadays, and the inherent likelihood that people like that should have lived in the places where Hasidism flourished around 1800 was surely nil. Still, Buber's writings on the Hasidim had three crucial functions.

First, they served as introductions and commentaries to his collections. (If the collections were worth having, then these writings filled an important place.) Secondly, these essays explored a possible meaning of religiousness and expanded our conception of the religious life. If we compare them with William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige*, and the vast literature on mysticism that appeared during the first half of this century, Buber's essays easily hold their own as an important and illuminating contribution. Finally, it was Buber who opened up the subject.

Die Erzählungen der Chassidim and *Gog und Magog* are Buber's most enduring creations, and are indeed masterpieces of religious literature. I once argued at some length that Buber's *Erzählungen* was "one of the great religious books of all time",[18] and that estimate was connected with my assumption that great religious books rarely stand or fall with their historical accuracy. The question of "what really happened" is always interesting, and when a religious book departs from the facts that is worth pointing out. But religious works have other dimensions as well, and Buber's two books have a literary quality that leads me to cite the original German titles. To do him justice, one must read the originals. I still feel that Hesse was right when he said that Buber, "like no other living author, has enriched world literature with a genuine treasure."[19]

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[18] The essay has been reprinted in W. Kaufmann, *Existentialism, Religion, and Death* (New York, 1976). It was originally published in *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* (1957).

[19] Hermann Hesse, *Briefe* (1951).

[20] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels* (1906). *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften* (ed. Herman Nohl, 1907). The earliest manuscripts in this volume have not been included in the English version of Hegel's *Early Theological Writings* (trans. T. M. Knox and Richard Kroner, Chicago, 1948), but I have included some quotations from this material in an essay on "The Young Hegel and Religion", which appeared in Walter Kaufmann, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (Boston, 1959, and Garden City, N.Y., 1960), and also in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays* (ed. Alasdair MacIntyre, Garden City, N.Y., 1972). An earlier and shorter version of the essay was published in *The Philosophical Review* (January 1954).

BUBER'S MOTIVATION has been overlooked not only by his critics but also by most of his admirers. Wilhelm Dilthey was his teacher, and Dilthey struggled his life long to spell out the difference between the natural sciences and the mental sciences, or rather what he called *die Geisteswissenschaften*. But Dilthey also wrote a remarkable book on the young Hegel (reporting on unpublished Hegel manuscripts that one of Dilthey's students published a year later, in 1907).[20] In the 1790s the young Hegel, then in his twenties, was interested in the possibility of a "folk religion" that would be free of all irrational elements. It was Dilthey who made this known in 1905, in a lecture a few months before his book appeared; and it was then that Martin Buber began

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his efforts to construct a Jewish folk religion that would contain nothing contrary to reason. His work on the Hasidim and his Biblical studies are misunderstood when they are viewed as historical studies, just as *I and Thou* is misunderstood when it is considered as a contribution to epistemology.

Indeed the young Hegel wrote a "Life of Jesus" in which Jesus teaches Kant's moral philosophy; but this was grotesque, and Hegel did not publish it. This had been *his* attempt to furnish a scripture for his "folk religion." Buber's Hasidic tales are not grotesque, and he did publish them; but they have to be understood along with his Biblical studies and *I and Thou* as parts of an epic effort to create a viable humanistic religion—a non-theological, non-halachic Judaism. That was Buber's most ambitious and fascinating undertaking, and it failed.

One aspect of *I and Thou* that was much more important to Buber than to most of his readers was that the book ruled out all discourse about God, including all of theology. He did not like to be called a theologian or a mystic. He associated mysticism with the drowning of the I in the divine Thou, and theology with the reduction of the divine Thou to an It. He wanted a religion in which the individual could address God and be addressed by God, but a religion that left no room for talk about God. Nor did Buber attend religious services. The only rabbis, not to speak of ministers and priests, for whom Buber had any use were dead rabbis. Of course, he respected men who happened to be rabbis (Leo Baeck, for example); but as a religious person he had no need of rabbis. What he wanted to create was a new humanistic religion.

It is easy to register Buber's failures as a scholar and a teacher, as a translator and a philosopher, and as a Zionist. But, as Gilbert Murray once remarked, "There is not one play of Euripides in which a critic cannot find serious flaws. . . ." The same could be said of Buber's books; but one should add, as Murray did: "the worse the critic, the more he will find."[21] Faults are really not hard to discover, and the critic who gloats over them is likely to be so immersed in details that he fails to see what transcends such faults.

One flaw, in my view, remains crucial. This is not, as one might suppose, that Buber did too many things and did not specialise enough. It is rather the false dichotomy that Buber presented to us in *I and Thou* and henceforth assumed to be fundamental instead of questioning it: that of the I-You and the I-It. By associating the former with a kind of ecstasy while relegating all objectification, reflection, examination, and careful thought to the I-It, he provided a philosophical justification for excessive subjectivity, illusions, and murkiness.

THAT BUBER RANGED as widely as he did was precisely what still makes him interesting and important. That he was not more rigorous, self-critical, and scholarly is regrettable but not a price one must necessarily pay for breadth.

If we compare Buber with our contemporaries and above all with the teachers and scholars at our universities today, his stature seems secure. As specialisation has increased, something important has been lost. Buber created a cosmos from the chaos of the modern world, and when one encountered him one encountered his world as well. It was not small or merely academic, but a world that embraced past and present. It was not oppressive because it was not a finished system to be handed over to students. The soul of this world was Buber's ceaseless striving through the whole length of his rich life. He was not free from vanity, but he was never self-satisfied or complacent (and kept trying to improve his translation of the Bible, for example, until he died). I am moved to say of him,

He was a man, take him for all in all.
I shall not look upon his like again.

[21] *The Literature of Ancient Greece* (1897; 1956), p. 273.

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Days with the Orchestra

Memoirs—By BORIS GOLDOVSKY

In Berlin (Artur Schnabel)

I DID NOT FEEL a stranger in the cosmopolitan capital of Germany, where I had quite a few friends. Above all, I had Schnabel, whom I regarded with endless veneration. This of course was the way he wanted it to be. As his disciple, I was expected to tread *his* road and no other.

There was something thoroughly dogmatic, I am tempted to say Prussian, in Schnabel's attitude to his students. Even his apartment and the large room with the music library and the two Bechstein pianos seemed designed to induce a sentiment of awe. I knew he had a wife who was a singer, for I once heard them give a joint recital. But I can't recall having ever seen her when I came for my lesson. She was a distant, shadowy figure, like their son, who was also studying the piano and who later became quite a well-known pianist in his own right.

The same was true of Schnabel's other pupils. I knew they existed, but I had no idea who they were. Somehow our paths never crossed. Schnabel never mentioned them, just as he never talked about members of his family. He was a serious, tremendously concentrated person. And thus was created, unintentionally no doubt, a strange, Svengali-like relationship between master and apprentice to which, I must confess, I completely succumbed.

BORIS GOLDOVSKY *has been one of the most colourful personalities on the musical scene for most of this century. He was born (1908) in Moscow into a musical family—his mother, aunt, and uncle comprised a famous trio—and he himself was a musical prodigy, performing his first piano recital at the age of 9, and playing with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra at the age of 13. His memoirs—soon to be published by Houghton Mifflin—record a vivid chapter in transatlantic musical history. After Berlin (with Artur Schnabel) and Budapest (with Dohnanyi) he went to America and conducted, directed, taught; his first post-War presentation of Mozart's "Idomeneo" remains an extraordinary première. He still lives and works in Boston, and participates in the annual Tanglewood Festival.*

Schnabel was not interested in teaching digital technique, in one's ability to play the music being studied. He assumed—rashly in my case—that such problems had long since been disposed of, just as he had disposed of them in his own younger years. What interested him was the composition we happened to be working on, and this he had analysed down to the very last detail. It had to be played exactly the way he played it, because that was what he, Schnabel, had discovered after prolonged meditation. *"Das naheliegende ist immer falsch!"* he would repeat, lest I be tempted to think that the composer had written something facile or superficial. The treasures of musical masterworks were always buried beneath the surface. They were like glittering pearls which only a well-trained diver could bring up from the depths.

Schnabel had a theory that music consists mostly of four-measure phrases, linked in certain ways and bearing special relationships to each other which have to be carefully observed. The result was a kind of musical geometry in which everything was worked out in advance. There could be no variation from this preordained scheme of things because upon it was stamped the static seal of perfection.

Only later did I begin to grasp how crippling this mode of instruction could be. For Schnabel, basically, was not interested in developing the musical insights and intuitions of his students. He wanted them to participate in music on his own exclusive terms. Any other were, by definition, inferior, second-rate, misleading. For he, once and for all, had discovered *the* truth. He was a kind of prophet, a Moses laying down the law and insisting that one learn the Ten Commandments.

Linked to this credo was the extraordinary notion that great composers were infallible. This was particularly true of Beethoven, whom he placed above all others. Beethoven, being a superhuman figure, could never commit an accidental error. Schnabel could not admit the possibility that Beethoven could make a slip of the pen.

No, indeed! The wrongly written note was simply the mark of Beethoven's unorthodox, tradition-breaking genius.

In the first movement of his *Hammerklavier* Sonata, for example, there is an obvious omission

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just before the recapitulation of the opening theme, where Beethoven forgot to place a natural sign before the A. Gustav Mahler, who, like other modern composers, readily experimented with new intervals and dissonances, used to put an asterisk next to such intervals, adding below: "This is not a misprint." But this was something Schnabel could not accept. And so, in annotating the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, he added a footnote in which those, i.e., the critics, the doubters, the blasphemers who called "the dogmatic propositions of Harmony to their aid", were told to bow down in repentance since they could not stand up against the greatness of a genius who dared to use an A-sharp before an F-natural. The man who composed the *Hammerklavier* Sonata was not an ordinary mortal, capable of human error. He was a demigod and thus infallible.

This, of course, is not a sensible point of view, as I later came to realise. But at the time I was ready to follow Schnabel down any road and to the extremes of any aberration. Though my piano technique was clumsy, I was a reasonably good imitator, and like all imitators, I found it easiest to ape the affectations and the mannerisms.

One of Schnabel's peculiarities was a tendency to grunt while playing. I don't think he himself was aware of it. In my infatuated innocence I convinced myself that this is what all great pianists have to do. These grunts were the outward manifestation of an intense, inner concentration. They were a mark of genius. Soon I began grunting too, like the master. If anything, I outgrunted Schnabel, as I think all of his students did. For it was the one thing we could all fairly easily achieve.

Only much later, after I had had a lot of experience teaching singers how to behave on stage and had studied muscular mechanics, did I understand the cause of his grunting. Piano playing requires considerable muscular effort—in one's fingers, arms, and shoulders—particularly when one has to play loud or difficult passages. Bit by bit, unless one has learned to relax them, other muscles begin to tighten. It is very easy to have the neck and throat tense up too, and then, without realising it, one begins making grunting or moaning sounds which one may not hear oneself, but which are perfectly audible to others. These can be eliminated through special exercises and precautions—of which Artur Schnabel was sublimely ignorant, as he was of all questions of mechanical or muscular technique.

SCHNABEL WAS an utterly serious musician. He had no use for short, "entertaining" pieces. Once, when asked in what way his concert programmes differed from those of other pianists, he answered gruffly: "My programmes are boring—also after the intermission." There was nothing of the musical demagogue about him, and he was not going to compromise his own lofty ideals just to pander to the public taste. He was going to give his audiences the noblest, the finest, the deepest music, whether they liked it or not.

Not all of these "masterworks" were by Beethoven. For it is a great mistake to think that Schnabel neither played nor fancied anything else. Two of the great works he had me study and which he obviously loved were the B-minor sonatas of Chopin and Liszt. These were far beyond the reach of my limited technique, and though I sought to imitate him as best I could, I was never satisfied with the results. For some reason I could not get my Blüthner baby grand to behave as I wanted it to. I had the vision, but the reality was beyond my grasp. My "salvation" was accompanied by a belated reaction against everything Schnabel represented. I began to detest the god I had once adored.

In the early 1920s Schnabel had made a trip to the United States which left him much embittered. It was the "return to normalcy" period of Warren Harding, when Americans—most of them, at any rate—wanted to turn their backs on Europe and the world. They had had their fill of Wilsonian idealism and were now interested in getting rich quick, by gambling on the stock market or digging like mad beavers for oil. Schnabel's "profound interpretations" did not appeal to American audiences, who wanted slick keyboard performances; and his trip to the United States was a resounding flop.

About America Schnabel never spoke to me save in the most critical and cynical terms. Americans, he would say, have no understanding of anything decent or profound, they are money-grubbers devoted to shallow and superficial pleasures. When I once asked him about the kinds of pianos they had over there, he replied: "Oh, the pianos are excellent", adding: "They are a lot better than the people who own them."

He also told me a story which he must have picked up from somebody else, since he himself was a performer rather than a lecturer. When Americans die, he said, the good ones move slowly up towards heaven, forming large, gregarious groups, like the tourists one often sees gaping at European monuments or clambering over venerable ruins. Finally the good Americans reach a point where there are two signs. One, pointing left, reads: *"This way to Paradise."* The other, pointing right, reads: *"This way to a lecture on Paradise."* Invariably, Schnabel claimed, the Americans choose the right-hand road.

Times change and so do tastes and prejudices. During the early Depression years Schnabel returned to the United States, probably expecting a chilly reception. Instead, his recitals touched off thunderous ovations and won him unprecedented acclaim. His "profound" way of playing seemed to

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appeal to people who had rediscovered the meaning of hardship, suffering, and despair. Suddenly there was nobody quite like him. He was unique, in a class of his own. He was the master of masters, the greatest Beethoven interpreter the world had ever seen.

My own enthusiasm, in the meantime, had waned. Though he came to cities where I lived and worked—like Philadelphia and Cleveland—I never once went to hear him play. I made no effort to meet the teacher I had once revered. I now look back on this attitude with shame. I realise how shabby my behaviour was . . . when I think of all the hours of instruction he had given me free-of-charge.

Yet mine was an understandable reaction. When I began to realise how overpowering his influence on me had been, I developed a hatred for what he represented. I fought to free myself from a hypnotic influence which I felt had been crippling, which had robbed me of my artistic individuality. For years I could never play any piano piece I had studied with him without feeling that Schnabel was standing over me, telling me *exactly* how it must be interpreted. I had the feeling that these pieces were lost to me forever, that I would never make them truly my own.

In all fairness to Schnabel, I should add that other pianists and dedicated Schnabel students—like Victor Babin and his wife, Vitya Vronsky—with whom, much later, I discussed these questions, did not react as I had. Schnabel, they claimed, had let them express their own musical individualities. He had not struck them as being either overpowering, tyrannical, or dogmatic. But then they had studied under him when they were quite a bit older than I had been. Schnabel's methods, they suggested were not appropriate for children. They were probably right.

In Budapest (Ernö Dohnányi)

GERMAN was the lingua franca used when Josef Hofmann came to call on us at the Great Northern Hotel, which, being only half a block distant from Carnegie Hall on West 57th Street, was much favoured by visiting musicians. Like Schnabel, he was on the shortish side, and he had the squat build of a mountaineer. With his light brown hair, turned-up nose, and a rather nondescript face, he did not look at all like a musician. The one thing about him that might have led one to suspect that he was an artist was a certain moodiness which would often descend on his brow and sit there like a cloud.

Just how they had met I do not now recall; it may have been on the ship which had first brought Mother to the United States. But by her violin playing Josef Hofmann had been much impressed. My piano playing, on the other hand, left him cold. The living room's upright piano, on which I boldly launched into Liszt's B-Minor Sonata, could not stand comparison with the Bechsteins and Blüthners I had played in Berlin. But what was far more serious and less excusable to Hofmann was my slipshod way of handling the keyboard. The "profundity" of my playing, *à la* Artur Schnabel, did not impress him in the least. No matter how "deep" and "metaphysical" this particular style might claim to be, this to him was a sloppy way of playing the piano.

To have my talent brushed aside by somebody like Josef Hofmann, for whom Mother had an almost limitless admiration, was a humbling experience. But we were both too busy at that moment preparing for Mother's forthcoming performance with the State Symphony Orchestra to worry too much about it. The time for deciding what I should do would come after the concert was over. In the meantime, the man who was to conduct the orchestra—a Hungarian named Ernö Dohnányi, or Ernst von Dohnányi, as he was more generally known abroad—had telephoned, asking if he could call at the Great Northern Hotel to listen to her play the Prokofieff concerto. . . .

I finally screwed up my courage and asked if I could come out to his Forest Hills hotel, explaining that I wanted his advice about my piano playing, which was not what it should be. He readily assented, and a day or two later I took the Long Island train to Forest Hills, where he and Madame Dohnányi were staying. I was ushered into an impressive suite, where the first thing I noticed was a Chickering concert grand. Affable as ever, Dohnányi invited me to sit down and play anything I liked.

At the time my *cheval de bataille*—the "battle-horse" on which I liked to pin my musical colours—was Liszt's B-Minor Sonata, which I had carefully studied with Schnabel. I had vainly sought to impress Josef Hofmann by playing it. Now I hoped to have better luck. I played the sonata, which has but one long movement, lasting a good half hour, from beginning to end. Dohnányi listened patiently, not once trying to stop me. Having finished, I looked at him questioningly.

"My dear boy", he said, "you have a musical gift, that is certain. But I will be frank with you. You do not know how to play the piano. You seem to know nothing about technique."

"Ah, Herr von Dohnányi", I said, "I am so happy to hear you say that. I know myself that there is something wrong with my technical equipment. But in Berlin, where I studied, neither Leonid Kreutzer nor Artur Schnabel ever discussed such matters. They were only interested in other things. They seemed to think that I played well enough.

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You have just told me the truth. Please teach me how to play correctly."

Dohnányi shook his head. "I am sorry, but this I cannot do."

"Why not?" I asked. "You have analysed my problem. Why can't you help me?"

"I will be honest with you. I do not know how to teach piano technique."

"What do you mean you do not know?" I insisted. "You play so beautifully yourself. Your fingers do exactly what you want them to do—you know how it is done."

"Yes, I play well", he agreed. "My fingers do what I want them to do, but just how they do it, I honestly do not know. It is all instinctive. It is not something I can teach others."

At this point I began to get aggressive, for I was a pretty brash youth and I was not going to take no for an answer. "You have analysed my problem, yet now you say you are not going to help me. You are the one person who can, who must help me! If you cannot teach me, then I would like to know who can!"

My vehemence evidently impressed him. At least I knew what I wanted.

"All right . . . I'll tell you . . . I do know somebody. . . ." He paused for a moment of reflection. "I know somebody who might be able to help you. She is a woman and she lives in Budapest."

"What is she?" I asked. "One of your assistants, one of your students?"

"No, she's neither an assistant nor a student. In fact, I do not know her well at all."

"What do you mean—you do not know her well? Then how can you recommend her?"

"Let me explain", said Dohnányi. "I have had to listen to a great many students at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest. Some played the piano fairly well, others not so well. But those who played the best, I soon discovered, had all been trained by this woman."

"What is her name?"

"Irèn Senn."

"Ah", I said. I don't know what I had expected, but I had never heard of her.

"It is a long way, I realise, but if you wish to go to Budapest, I feel sure she will be happy to teach you. And you will have no cause to regret it." "All right", I said. "I'm ready to go to Budapest. Why not? But if I do, will you also teach me?"

Dohnányi smiled. My enthusiasm must have flattered as well as amused him. "Yes, I will help you. But you must first work with Miss Senn. After that you can study with me."

MY PIANO TEACHER, Irèn Senn, turned out to be a tall and energetic spinster with kindly grey eyes and a smiling and open countenance. She gave lessons in a large apartment which she shared with her bachelor brother.

Under Karl Avgustovich Kipp, in Moscow, I had developed the muscles in my hands and fingers by spending hours of excruciating practice going through the monotonous Hanon exercises. I had learned something of the "how" of piano playing, without understanding any of the "why." This Irèn Senn proceeded to explain to me, at any rate in part—for it was not until much later, when I came across Arnold Schultz's *The Riddle of the Pianist's Finger*, that I finally understood what piano playing is really all about.

Reduced to essentials, piano playing consists of little more than pushing down keys. In this it resembles typing, which is also a method for pushing down keys, though the emphasis and aim—a more or less uniform speed—are of course quite different. To play the piano well, you have to learn how to push the keys down in different ways—sometimes hard and loud, at other times softly; sometimes very fast, at other times slowly.

Irèn Senn distinguished two different types of playing very sharply. She called the first—for loud, slow playing—"the Big technique", and the second—for fast, soft playing—"the Small technique." The Big technique involved the activities of one's arms and shoulders, and the angle of the spine and torso best suited to exert a maximum of effective muscular contractions. The Small technique involved the finger muscles of the hands, and in particular the fingertips, so important to the playing of very fast and very soft passages.

In order to master these two techniques Irèn Senn had developed a whole series of exercises which her students had to perform every day. She also taught me something else that was invaluable. One of the major problems of piano playing is that it is difficult to play loudly without having it sound harsh. We have all of us been exposed at one time or another to a brutal key-pounder, whose insensitive hammering causes the strings inside the box to reverberate and echo in the most jarring fashion. To get around this problem, Irèn Senn taught us what she called the "double touch." We were never supposed to strike a key directly. One had first to finger it before striking, so that the down-action, when it came, was more pushing than hitting. And this technique of pre-touching or double-touching did not only hold for soft passages. We had to master it for all forms of playing, from the loudest and slowest to the softest and fastest.

Unlike Artur Schnabel, who had always enveloped his private life in a shroud of mystery, Dohnányi from the start had welcomed me into the family. And a curious family it was. For in addition to Mr and Mrs Dohnányi, it included two mothers-in-law and two sons from different fathers.

The new house into which Ernö Dohnányi had recently moved with his family was as unusual as the persons inhabiting it. Located in the suburbs,

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on the Buda side of the Danube, it had a tall gabled roof and was built into a steep pine-studded hillside, which had once been part of a royal hunting preserve. If you entered from the small, upper-garden side, you found yourself on the floor where all the bedrooms were located and you had to descend the stairs to reach the main rooms. These included a spacious dining room and the drawing room, which contained two Bösendorfer pianos.

Dohnányi's wife, née Elsa Galafrés, was born and brought up in Berlin. Too flighty and undisciplined to become a really first-class pianist, she had found an outlet for her romantic and histrionic inclinations as an actress and a dancer. Her first husband, Bronislaw Huberman, was a famous Polish violinist who suffered agonies of anticipatory doubt and stage fright each time he had to give a public recital. She had borne him a son—a blond-haired boy Johannes (better known as "Hally")—who had later become a bitter bone of contention when she decided that she could no longer live with her high-strung, insomniac, perpetually concert-touring husband. The resultant legal wrangle had become a pre-War *cause célèbre*, but she had managed to retain custody of her child even after the start of her liaison with Ernö Dohnányi, who was fascinated by her theatrical performance in the Viennese production of his musical pantomime, *The Veil of Pierrette*, as she was by his calm, confident, intelligent conducting.

Mme Dohnányi, as often happens with ladies who have an unconventional past to live down, had since turned into a model of marital respectability. She stressed duty and discipline, extolled law and order, and had no use for manifestations of revolutionary *laisser-aller* and license.

Dohnányi himself was a reserved rather than an outgoing personality. The enigmatic smile that flitted about his lips expressed an ironic appreciation of life, but it was also a kind of screen behind which he hid his innermost thoughts and inclinations. He was essentially a tolerant person and, as a well-bred Austro-Hungarian aristocrat, he seldom raised his voice or expressed violent opinions.

IN THE AUTUMN of 1928, I was one of four privileged students to be admitted to Dohnányi's piano master class in the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, of which Dohnányi had just been named co-director. Dohnányi had been offered the directorship at the end of the First World War, when he was barely forty. Characteristically, he had turned the offer down, having no taste for administrative work and no need of an official post or title to bolster his soaring prestige as Hungary's foremost musician. His first major composition—a Piano Quintet in C-Minor, which he wrote when he was only seventeen—was praised by Brahms, who exclaimed after hearing the performance: "I couldn't have done better myself." Since then, between love affairs and concert tours which won him international acclaim, Dohnányi had managed to compose a number of major works. In 1927 he was appointed permanent director of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, and by the time I came to know him, he was the uncontested as well as uncrowned king of Hungarian music. Budapest had seen nothing like it since the declining years of Franz Liszt, and if the present is any criterion for estimating the future, it will not see the like of him again.

I feel the need to say this because Ernö Dohnányi is not particularly well known today. His fame as a piano player has sunk into oblivion, while his renown as a composer has been overshadowed by the achievements of his slightly younger contemporaries Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. When I was in Budapest, both were considered to be rabid "modernists" and much appreciated as impassioned collectors of Hungarian folk music. Though they respected Dohnányi as a musician—Bartók had even taken piano lessons from him for a while—both men, and even more their followers, tended to look down on Dohnányi's post-Romantic, post-Brahmsian style of composing as much too "sentimental" and old-fashioned for their avant-garde tastes. Dohnányi might be the Tsar of Hungarian music, but he represented the *ancien régime*, which the young rebels wanted to replace with something newer and better. Dohnányi, for his part, felt little sympathy for the harsh dissonances and orchestral complications which Bartók and Kodály boldly indulged in. He was even ready to disparage their passion for Hungarian folk music, seeing in it a deliberate return to primitivism. "Primitivism stands at the beginning of a culture, and to return to it after a culture has developed is to display the impotence and senility of 'second youth'. . . ."

At the time I was not much concerned by these musical fads and feuds, any more than was Dohnányi, who was not a person to lose sleep over the comments of rivals or the condemnations of detractors. Indeed, with a self-assurance which some found much too patronising, he purposely threw away all laudatory articles, keeping only unflattering reviews, which were retained more for the sake of amusement and as a commentary on the authors than for their relevance to his playing or conducting. Nor did his feelings about Bartók amount to anything like a taboo, for when I once brought a set of mildly modernistic Bartók dances to one of our regular piano lessons, he willingly played them for me. But he also made it clear that this was not really his "cup of tea."

As a protégé of Dohnányi, I was virtually treated as a member of the family and allowed to attend the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra's Sunday

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afternoon performances, held in the main auditorium of the Franz Liszt Academy, where Mme Dohnányi and her sons and relatives had a row of reserved seats at their disposal. I could also, as a well-heeled "American" with money to burn, have spent many evenings at the opera. But as I had little taste for it, much preferring the less-stilted vitality of the theatre stage, I limited my visits to a few Wagnerian operas.

Here too I learned a lesson from Dohnányi I have never forgotten. I had gone to a performance of *Tristan und Isolde*, which I had never seen before, and though enormously impressed and overwhelmed by the grandeur and richness of the music, my powers of concentration began to wilt during the long last act. At our next lesson I told Dohnányi that I had seen *Tristan* performed at the Royal Opera House, that the first two acts had seemed to me marvellous but that the third had struck me as much inferior, too long, and even boring in its interminable repetitions. Dohnányi did not look pained or outraged by this observation; on the contrary, he seemed to appreciate its frankness. "Now you must promise that you will do something for me", he said, as though he were asking a favour of me rather than issuing a gentle reprimand. "You have a pass to the Opera House?" I nodded. "Well, the next time they perform *Tristan*, find out when the final act begins. Don't go to hear the first two acts, but go in for the last act only. Then tell me if you still feel the same way."

I followed this sage advice and was greatly surprised by the result. The third act of *Tristan*, unpreceded by the two others, now seemed like a revelation. I realised then that there is a limit to what a music lover can reasonably absorb in one evening. Four hours of music are tiring even for those who are the best disposed or the most intent in listening. There is a lot more to be said about the peculiarly hypnotic effect of Wagner's music, but the truth that Dohnányi had helped me to discover applies in general to all music, just as it does to all long operas. Even today I rarely sit through an entire opera. I prefer to see and hear one act at a time. In this way I can give it the maximum of intelligent attention and derive the greatest satisfaction from the performance. Long operas—let us be honest about it—are very difficult to take.

In Philadelphia (Fritz Reiner)

CONDUCTING CLASSES WITH Fritz Reiner at the Curtis Institute of Music were not exclusively devoted to opera, but from the start that was where the emphasis was placed. I remember that he had us study Beethoven's First Symphony, and not long afterwards he assigned us the introduction to the last movement of his Ninth, which is notorious for its difficulty and complexity.

Preparing for one of Reiner's conducting sessions was an arduous business. One had to know the piece of music being studied meticulously so as to be able to say, whenever he chose to question us: "At this point the two bassoons play these notes, and then they are joined by a clarinet, which plays . . .", etc. Woe to the person who resorted to guesswork to cover up his ignorance. Reiner would descend on the poor fellow like an eagle and make mincemeat of his pretences. Not only was he ignorant, he was a liar to boot! It was better to say one did not know, at the risk of being told that one was *total unbegabt* (totally untalented), which was one of Reiner's favourite and most withering expressions.

Since he was always trying to trip us with trick questions, the four of us got together over the Christmas holidays of 1931 and spent hours cross-examining each other to check our knowledge of the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, "Which instrument plays this? . . . Which instruments play that? . . . Start conducting four measures before the letter A", and so on. We carried the whole business to exaggerated extremes, for once determined not to be defeated by unexpected queries and made to look like dolts.

Reiner held his conducting classes in a large room which contained two grand pianos. When we turned up for the next scheduled lesson, shortly after New Year, we found him seated in front of one of the pianos looking more than usually grim. We stood there, waiting for him to select one of us and say, "You were assigned the last movement of the Ninth Symphony, were you not? Well, take the stick and start!" The stick was Reiner's, an elegant baton with a distinctive cork handle with which we tried to imitate his precise, subtle, extremely spare style of conducting.

Instead, Reiner said, "Goldovsky, come here!" There was a thundercloud over his head; a storm was clearly brewing, but why, I had no idea. I came up to the piano, while my colleagues sat down to wait their turn. On the rack was a thick score. But before I could see what it was, Reiner opened it brusquely, pointed to a spot on the page, and asked, "Who plays this?"

I stared at the page and realised that it had nothing to do with the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which we were supposed to have studied. It was obviously the piano vocal score of some Wagnerian opera. But I had not the faintest idea which opera it might be, still less which particular instrument or instruments played this particular passage.

"But, *Meister*", I began.

"Please don't argue with me", interrupted Reiner.

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"Do you know it or don't you know it? Who plays this?"

It would have been folly to hazard a guess. "I don't know", I answered.

"Van den Burg", he called, summoning the next victim, while I went back to sit with the others. "Who plays this?"

Van den Burg stared at the score as I had, shrugged his shoulders helplessly, and said, "I don't know."

It was Saul Cohen's turn next, and then Louis Vyner's. They were no wiser than I and had to confess that they didn't know.

That was all Reiner needed. He stood up. "You are a bunch of ignorants!" he exploded, and then marched out of the room.

After he had left, we crowded round the piano. The passage he had pointed to was from the first act of Wagner's *Die Walküre*. We looked at each other in bewilderment. Hadn't he assigned us the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony? He most certainly had! We wouldn't have slaved over it for hours, trying to memorise every note and measure, played by every instrument, if he hadn't. Then what was the meaning of it all?

Only later, quite by accident, did I discover the reason for this extraordinary behaviour. Reiner wanted to go to some kind of party, and our weekly lesson happened to conflict with it. So instead of simply postponing our class, he preferred to surprise us with a Wagner score we hadn't been told to study. This was Reiner's way of killing two birds with one stone. He got out of an irksome duty and at the same time succeeded in exposing his students' "ignorance."

AS THE MONTHS WENT BY I found myself, unwillingly, more and more absorbed in opera. Remorselessly, relentlessly Reiner drilled us, taking us from the orchestral recitatives of *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Carmen* through Beckmesser's serenade from *Die Meistersinger* (which is full of "stop" and "go" signals) and the Sprecher scene from *The Magic Flute*. My basic dislike of opera remained as keen as ever, but I was beginning to know something about this complex form of art. . . .

FRITZ REINER asked me to stay on at the Curtis Institute as a coach and as a special assistant for opera productions—a job for which I was to be paid an additional $50 a week. His electrifying *Elektra* production had been followed, during the previous academic season, by a performance of Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, in which I was dressed up as a Russian nobleman in order to direct some of the on-stage choruses. Two months later (in February 1932) I had to appear on stage again, during a performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin*, sneaking out behind the backs of King Henry's four trumpeters in order to give them advance warning of their musical cues. In April Reiner squeezed in two more operas—*Carmen* and *Aida*—but with this final flourish the Philadelphia Grand Opera Association quietly gave up the ghost. Even the wealthy and generous Mrs Bok could no longer cover its ever-mounting debts.

As part of a belt-tightening régime imposed by the Depression, New York's Metropolitan Opera Company had seen fit to forgo its regular Tuesday-night excursions to Philadelphia. To fill the cultural void thus opened, the trustees of the Philadelphia Orchestra decided on a bold innovation. Since neither the Met nor the city's now defunct opera company could provide this kind of entertainment, the orchestra would step into the breach, embellishing the forthcoming concert season (1934–1935) with a series of special opera performances, to be put on in the Academy of Music's main auditorium. The schedule called for a total of ten operas, which were to be interlarded into the normal concert season. A new opera was to be presented every third week—the first performance being given on a Thursday afternoon, followed by a second performance on Saturday evening, and a third and final showing three nights later.

The idea had not appealed to everyone, beginning with the Philadelphia Orchestra's resident conductor, Leopold Stokowski, who would have

FRITZ REINER

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nothing to do with it. Since his assistant, Alexander Smallens, could not handle more than five operas himself, Fritz Reiner was asked to conduct the rest.

The Philadelphia Orchestra was then probably the finest in the world. I realise that this statement may sound a bit extreme to those who were not alive at the time or who were too young to remember its extraordinary quality and renown.

The bane of all orchestras is a tendency to sloppiness, which sets in as a result of repetitive routine. Since all orchestra conductors have their strengths and weaknesses, and since there are a limited number of things that they can really teach well-trained players, it is rare for an orchestral ensemble to play at its very best under the same conductor for more than a few years. Under Stokowski, certain sections of the Philadelphia Orchestra, particularly the woodwinds and the brasses, had reached a state of remarkable excellence as early as 1925. I can still remember the sound of three muted trumpets in Debussy's *Fêtes* (as orchestrated by Ravel) which I was fortunate enough to hear in the autumn of that year. It was a sound such as I have never heard (before or since) —hauntingly beautiful, like some foretaste of paradise.

Part of the credit for such breathtaking effects undoubtedly belonged to "Stokie", as he was popularly known. But much of it was also due to the proximity of the Curtis Institute of Music and its great teachers. For the graduates who joined the Philadelphia Orchestra were not only playing for the conductor, whether it was Stokowski or Smallens; they were sitting next to their peers, and—what was even more important—were being judged by their teachers in a more or less permanent examination.

No one knew this better than Fritz Reiner. After his Cincinnati setback this was the chance of a lifetime. Now he could really display his conducting talents in opera, that most difficult and challenging of musical fields.

METICULOUS AS EVER, Fritz Reiner made frequent journeys to New York to hire the finest voices he could obtain for the major roles and to audition promising young singers for the secondary parts. He was not going to miss this unique chance of conducting a superlative orchestra by lining up a second-rate cast. But he was quite prepared to give a chance to talented beginners who had yet to make their mark.

For the first of the scheduled season's operatic offerings Fritz Reiner had chosen Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. He had decided, furthermore, to present it in its entirety—something no opera company in the US had ever dreamed of doing—and to add to the unprecedented splendour of the occasion, he had asked one of America's foremost scenic designers, Donald Oenslager, who was then teaching at Yale, to design the sets.

The results were memorable, particularly for the opera's first act, which takes place on board the ship that is carrying Tristan and Isolde from Ireland to Cornwall. This act has always posed scenic problems, since the focus of acting and singing keeps shifting back and forth from the quarters occupied by Isolde and her personal maid, Brangäne, to the deck, reserved for Tristan and the sailors. Oenslager's solution to this problem was dramatic in the extreme. He designed a ship with the bow pointed upstage into the open sea (to right and left). Forecastle and bowsprit were hidden by a huge sail-like drape. But when the drape was opened, like a moving sail, the spectators could see Tristan seated high up by the bowsprit, next to some sailors.

Viewed from the orchestra seats and the boxes, the result was a striking visual experience. But I soon discovered, when I went upstairs during one of the first stage rehearsals, that the bowsprit was placed so high that nothing but Tristan's boots could be seen from the second balcony.

The scenery's other peculiarity affected nobody but myself. As the conductor's chief assistant, I had to find a spot from which I could follow Reiner's beat and transmit it to the backstage chorus. But the ship Oenslager had devised was so solid and impenetrable that I could not find a crack or a chink through which to see Reiner. I was finally forced to lie down on my stomach near the bow and twist my neck in such a way that I could see Reiner on his podium, while I transmitted his sober beat with my left hand. Such—before the introduction of closed-circuit TV hook-ups—were the challenges that assistant opera conductors then had to face and overcome.

Quite different were the problems encountered in the production of *The Marriage of Figaro*, which followed. In this opera, orchestrally accompanied numbers are separated by so-called *secco* recitatives, which are half-sung and half-spoken to the accompaniment of a keyboard instrument. Some of these recitatives are rather long, and to keep from boring the audience, most conductors shorten them considerably. Such surgical operations require a certain skill, for one cannot simply cut in the middle of a sentence, ruining the verbal logic of the text, nor can one destroy the continuity of the music by joltingly shifting from one key to another. In other words, the cuts must make sense semantically as well as musically.

Reiner, like other opera conductors, had devised his own cuts in places where he felt that the least violence was done to the underlying intentions of composer and librettist. His scores were marked with the letter *F* where the cut began and with the letter *R* where the cut ended, a method I later copied with my own initials when I too started

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producing operas.

Before we began rehearsing *Figaro*, I brought my piano vocal score to Reiner, who marked it up with *F* and *R*. I thus knew, well in advance of our first stage rehearsal, exactly what was to be played and what was to be omitted. Much of the preliminary coaching had already been done by Reiner in New York, but when the time came for the ensemble rehearsals the singers moved to Philadelphia. Reiner would sit on a chair in one corner of a large room, quietly beating time, occasionally stopping the singers to make needed corrections, while I played the piano, which was placed off to one side in such a way that I could see conductor and singers.

At our first *Figaro* rehearsal, which began in the middle of the morning, I got up after an hour-and-a-half of playing and asked Sylvan Levin to take over. Sylvan took my place at the piano, with his score open at the page where we had stopped. He then launched into a recitative section that Reiner wanted cut. Reiner immediately exploded. "What's going on here?" he cried. "Don't you know the opera?"

That was Reiner's way. Instead of asking Levin, "What's the matter with your score? Haven't you got the indicated cuts?" he had to browbeat and insult his assistant. But by this time Levin was fed up. He wasn't going to be humiliated by Reiner's offensive behaviour.

"I know this opera very well", he retorted.

"Why are you playing something we are not going to do?" demanded Reiner angrily.

"You didn't give me the cuts."

"But Goldovsky had the cuts."

"You gave Goldovsky the cuts, but you didn't give the cuts to me!" said Sylvan, as much as to say, "You've only yourself to blame for being so careless."

This was too much for Reiner. "You are fired!" he shouted, jumping up from his chair.

"I'm *not* fired!" answered Levin. "I have just resigned!" With that he picked up his hat and coat and walked out.

I had witnessed the scene, and now it was too late for me to make a quiet getaway.

"Hey there, Goldovsky, come back and sit down at the piano", cried Reiner. "We are going to go on with this rehearsal."

Obediently I returned to my post. Gone was all hope of an early lunch, as I played on and on without relief.

ACCOMPANYING SINGERS FOR HOURS ON END during opera rehearsals is a tiring business. It was more than one person could cope with, as Reiner well knew.

The first replacement was a gentleman from Boston named Alexander Steinert, who prudently insisted on obtaining a two-week written contract before agreeing to come down to Philadelphia. This particular assistant did not last long. We were rehearsing the third act when the moment came for him to spell me. Sitting down at the piano, Steinert proceeded to play the duet of the two peasant maidens a shade more slowly than we had rehearsed it the day before. Reiner immediately lost his temper.

"*Out!*" he cried, pointing imperiously at the offender. "*Out! Away!* I never want to see you again! Goldovsky! . . . Goldovsky! Where is that fellow anyway? Oh, there you are. Sit down at the piano and start playing. We've lost enough time as it is!"

It was no use trying to argue with Reiner. Once his mind was made up, there was no changing it. If he didn't like someone's way of playing the piano, then that was too bad. He wasn't going to give the fellow a second chance, he was through with him forever. In this case, however, he had partly met his match. For the gentleman from Boston, having been hired for two weeks, refused to remove himself from Reiner's sight entirely. Instead, he stretched out on the luxurious four-poster bed which Herbert Graf was using as an elegant prop for the Countess's boudoir in the second act, and proceeded to sleep through my playing for hours at a time. It was possibly the most handsomely rewarded rest anyone has ever enjoyed.

Reiner's drillwork tended to be ruthless and at times deliberately sadistic. He liked to play with his singers, much as a cat plays with a mouse, by unexpectedly changing the tempo from time to time. This was Reiner's way of keeping the singers on their toes, of forcing them to heed his sober beat. He, not the singer, was the boss, and (save for the exceptional star, whom he could not browbeat in this way) he wanted the singers to know it.

IT WAS WITH THE THIRD of this extraordinary season's operas—*Der Rosenkavalier*—that Reiner was really in his element. Because of his particular affinity for Richard Strauss, whose complicated scores were a perfect foil for his conducting talents, his *Rosenkavalier* was every bit as memorable as the *Elektra* he had conducted earlier and the *Salome* he later produced in New York. Indeed, of all the Richard Strauss opera conductors I have seen, and I have seen quite a few, Fritz Reiner was undoubtedly the finest.

As luck would have it, the great star of the Vienna Opera, Lotte Lehmann, was then in the US, so she could play the role of the Marschallin, which had made her world-famous. The singer Reiner chose for the role of Sophie (which Margaret was asked to understudy) was another darling of the Viennese, Elisabeth Schumann. At the first piano rehearsal her voice struck me as being much too

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weak for the part. I couldn't understand why Reiner had hired her. Though audible above my piano accompaniment, her fragile voice, I felt sure, would be completely drowned out by Strauss's sonorous orchestral textures. I asked Reiner how he could possibly have made such a choice.

He looked at me for a moment, then said, "You wait." I waited. On the afternoon of the first orchestra rehearsal, I got the surprise of my life. Elisabeth Schumann's seemingly tiny, light voice sailed out from the stage like a silver arrow. It cut through the orchestra with the greatest of ease and filled the auditorium with the most delicious sound. That taught me a lesson I was never to forget. It was not the volume or loudness of a voice that counts but the way it is pointed. Elisabeth Schumann's lyric soprano voice was beautifully projected, and her three renditions of the role of Sophie were in their own way as memorable as Lotte Lehmann's Marschallin.

In Cleveland (Arthur Rodzinski)

WE LEFT PHILADELPHIA and moved to Cleveland, and the first months were singularly pleasant, though my commuting back and forth to Philadelphia was to create some problems for me. Arthur Rodzinski could not have been kinder and more complimentary, as he introduced me to the members of the orchestra. Although he was only fourteen years older than myself, Rodzinski displayed an almost paternal affection and was soon calling me "Borischikov." He seemed enormously impressed by the fact that I had worked with Reiner, and, unlike Josef Hofmann, who had virtually written me off as a total keyboard loss, he appreciated the quality of my piano playing. He was equally delighted by my sight-reading proficiency, which he exploited almost shamelessly by having me sing *all* the parts of *Der Rosenkavalier* during the initial orchestral rehearsals.

To be carried like this on a velvet pillow was for me a new and somewhat heady experience after the many rough rides I had had with Fritz Reiner. Rodzinski's confidence in me during those early weeks in Cleveland seemed just about boundless. When the time came to rehearse the principal singers, who had been specially hired for the three performances in Cleveland, he called me in and said, "Borischikov, I'm too tied down here to be able to go to New York. So I'm sending you there alone to take care of the rehearsing. There's a run-through of *Rosenkavalier* with the six main singers scheduled for next Monday morning. Check them out and see to it that everything is the way we have planned it. Then they'll know what to expect when they come here for the final orchestra and stage rehearsals."

I was frankly astounded and not a little overawed. Here was I, a youngster of twenty-seven who had never conducted an opera in his life, being asked to check out world-famous singers, most of whom had been singing *Rosenkavalier* for years. Emanuel List, who had been chosen for the role of the lascivious Baron Ochs, posed no problem. I had already taken his measure during a tense piano rehearsal with Reiner in Philadelphia. But Grete Stückgold, who had been chosen for the role of Octavian, was an unknown quantity who might easily take offence if I found fault with her interpretation of the role. The most formidable of them all, however, was Lotte Lehmann, who had sung the Marschallin so many times that she had just about made it her exclusive property.

When I reached the rehearsal room in the Steinway Building in New York, I found the six principal singers waiting for the conductor to appear. I brought them Dr Rodzinski's greetings as well as his apologies for being unexpectedly detained in Cleveland, explaining that he had asked me to go through the opera with them in his absence. The singers probably raised their eyebrows and exchanged glances behind my back; but I decided that the best thing to do was to get down to business immediately so that they wouldn't feel that their time was being completely wasted.

At first everything went well. Mme Lehmann was seated to the left of me, while the others took up positions around the piano. All of them were experienced singers, they knew their roles well, and there was nothing for me to correct.

But then, in the first act, we came to the two Hofmannsthal lines:

Und wen von der Verwandtschaft haben Euer Liebden
für dieses Ehrenamt ausersehen?

which Lotte Lehmann sang with pitches and rhythms quite unlike those that were indicated in the score.

I stopped, wondering what to do. I couldn't conceivably say to this great lady of the operatic stage, "I am sorry, Madame, I am afraid that you have made a mistake." My tongue refused to utter anything so bold. Besides, I had a gnawing suspicion that Richard Strauss might have changed the music of these two lines especially for her, in a version I should have been acquainted with. In drawing attention to a mistake on her part, I might be revealing my own ignorance and inviting a stern rebuke, which would make me look like a monkey in front of the other singers. I had to think fast.

"Liebe, gnädige Frau", I said, "something happened here. Would you mind if we did it over again?"

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Mme Lehmann gave me a long, searching look. *"Mein lieber Knabe"*, she began—as though she were addressing a naughty adolescent—"you know I have sung this role under most of the great conductors of our time—under Otto Klemperer, under Bruno Walter, under Wilhelm Furtwängler, under Knappertsbusch, Kleiber, and Reiner. I was coached in this role by them all, and even, as you probably know, by Richard Strauss himself!" She paused for a dramatic moment, and I thought to myself, "Ah, here comes the slap!" But then, with adorable simplicity, she added, "You know, as far as this sentence is concerned, never mind. It's no use. I will never learn it right."

I heaved a sigh of relief. My impertinence in pointing out a variation between the score and her singing could have culminated in a most embarrassing *Krawall*—that wonderfully gritty German word for "row." Instead, she had paid gracious homage to my knowledge of the score. Her way of singing those two lines, as a matter of fact, was probably better than it would have been had she sung the phrase correctly.

Later, at the final rehearsal in Cleveland, she again sang the lines incorrectly, though with infinite charm, glancing at me archly, as much as to say, *"Sehen Sie!"* She could glance at me, I might add, because one of the four lackeys present on stage had happened to fall ill and I had had to replace him at all the dress rehearsals.

IN 1937 I had no clear idea of what lay in store for me, save for the fact that I had agreed to set up an opera department at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Beyond this first step my future was a blank and I had no idea that I was fated to become that essentially hybrid creature, an opera "expert", and even more, an opera "pioneer." I still fancied myself as destined to become another Fritz Reiner, not realising that my polymorphous talents, being more diffuse, might be creative in a different way and that the precision-loving mathematician who lay dormant within me was one day going to blossom into a kind of operatic Euclid and the author of the first and, so far as I know, only basic textbook yet written on operatic acting and stage directing.

When I returned to Cleveland in the autumn of 1937 I decided to sever my lingering connection with the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. I did so first of all because I now had more than enough to keep me busy in Cleveland, where I had an opera department to run and two large choral groups to train, quite aside from my active participation in chamber-music concerts and the piano lectures I had to prepare.

My second reason for leaving Philadelphia was the sobering realisation that I was not really made to be a symphony conductor. At a time when orchestra conductors have reached such a pinnacle of importance that their faces now frequently replace those of composers on the covers of recordings, it has become a commonplace to say that a good orchestra conductor needs to have an exceptionally keen ear to do the job he does. But it is not generally realised that he must have a very special kind of ear. The closest instrumentalists—the first semi-circle of string players—are not more than six feet from the conductor's podium. From them and the instruments behind them and, as it were, from all points of the compass come whispers or gusts of music, which engulf the conductor in successive waves of sound. In the midst of all this tumult, which in large orchestral compositions can reach a truly deafening volume, the good conductor must be able to cut through these cloudbursts of sound and identify any instrument that is not being played correctly.

No conductor can hope to survive for long if, unable to spot the trouble quickly, he has to stop the players and say, "Sorry, gentlemen, something went wrong. Let's do it over again." To such embarrassed requests most orchestra players react with disdain. They look at each other questioningly and mumble, "What kind of a lout is this anyway? What does he mean, '*Something* went wrong'?" Indeed, if orchestra players begin to suspect that their conductor cannot pick out the "guilty" instruments immediately, they are apt to play wrong notes deliberately. A trumpeter will get off a "fixer", or a tympanist will let one of his sticks fall on the drumhead just to enjoy the conductor's flustered frustration as he cries, "Who did that? Who made that noise?"

I had known all this for years, and at least as far back as my first exposure to orchestra conducting with the students of the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. But not until the spring of 1937, when I had to take the Curtis orchestra through Saint-Saëns, Mendelssohn, Goldmark, and Liszt, did I fully realise that I might not have the right kind of ear to be a truly first-rate symphony conductor. If I went back into the auditorium and put forty feet or more between myself and the nearest instruments, I could hear everything quite clearly and could immediately spot errors and pick out instrumentalists who were playing incorrectly. But when I was on the conductor's podium, it was as though my hearing faculties had lost their acuteness, seriously impairing my ability to detect mistakes.

Even experienced musicians are often surprised to discover how inept composers can be when they climb on to the podium and undertake to conduct their own works. The reason is simply that they lack the special noise-resisting and discriminating kind of ear that is the *sine qua non* of every truly competent conductor. I say "symphony conductor" advisedly, because this problem of massive, overwhelming waves of sound only presents

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itself in large symphonic works. For an opera conductor, who needs many other important gifts, the lack of an outstanding "symphonic ear" is not a serious liability.

In Tanglewood & Boston (Serge Koussevitzky)

IN SEPTEMBER 1939 I received a letter from Herbert Graf informing me that Serge Koussevitzky, the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, was opening a summer music school at Lenox, Massachusetts. He had asked Graf to head the new music centre's opera department, but not being an opera conductor, Graf, who knew me well from our work together in Philadelphia and Cleveland, had suggested that I be chosen as his musical assistant. The proposal apparently met with Koussevitzky's approval.

Although we were both of Russian origin, this was the first time I had ever had any dealings with Serge Koussevitzky. My mother, I knew, was an old friend of his. Uncle Pierre had often accompanied him on the piano at a time when Koussevitzky was touring Russia as a double-bass virtuoso; Pierre had also helped him later, playing orchestral scores on the piano when Koussevitzky was so laboriously learning to become a conductor, and he had even sailed down the Volga with him on one of Koussevitzky's famous pre-First World War orchestral tours.

I had heard Uncle Pierre tell many stories about this singularly warm-hearted, temperamental, hypersensitive human being, but it wasn't until I reached the Tanglewood estate the following summer that I realised how well Koussevitzky knew my family. A couple of days after my arrival I was invited to have tea with him at his luxurious country house, situated on a nearby hill. I told him how honoured I felt at having been given this opportunity to preside over the musical activities of his opera department, particularly since he knew so little about me and my abilities.

"You are mistaken", he said to me in Russian—the only language, as I was soon to discover, in which he could express himself with ease—"I know a great deal about you. But even if I knew less, I would still give you a chance. Being your father's son, you will be certain to do a good job."

It did not take me long to realise that family ties and past services were not enough to keep Koussevitzky happy if one failed to live up to the high expectations he entertained about all those who worked for and under him. He wanted the Berkshire Music Center to differ from other music schools in every possible respect. There was to be no official curriculum, there were to be no examinations nor any graduate diplomas. Instead there was to be a deliberate mixing of generations, with talented young people being exposed to gifted veterans for six intensive weeks of musical inspiration. And in this informal, experimental atmosphere, Koussevitzky was convinced, great things would burgeon.

ALL THIS WAS EXPLAINED to me personally by Koussevitzky, who began the summer course by calling in the various teachers to find out what they would like to undertake during the summer session. "Here in Tanglewood", he said to me, "you will be able to realise your secret dreams, to experiment with ideas you could not try out elsewhere. Now tell me, have you anything of the sort in mind?"

"Some of my ideas may seem utopian", I replied, "but still, I would like to find out what would happen if we were to treat opera singers like full-fledged artists and not like unmusical and clumsy marionettes who cannot be trusted to think for themselves."

"You expect opera singers . . . to be artists who think for themselves?"—Koussevitzky's hazel eyes seemed to widen as he stared at me fixedly. "But, good Lord", he said, as though he had just listened to some scandalous enormity, "this certainly cannot be done."

"You may be right", I said. "Perhaps it cannot be done. But would you mind if I try?"

"Oh, no", he said. "Go ahead and try. By all means, go ahead and try. I give you *carte blanche*."

The gifted luminaries whom Koussevitzky had assembled to inspire the carefully screened and sifted summer students (312 accepted, out of about 600 applicants) included Paul Hindemith and Aaron Copland for composition, Olin Downes for musical history, G. Wallace Woodworth and Hugh Ross for choral music, and Herbert Graf and myself for opera. The conducting classes—a larger one for general instruction and a smaller one for particularly gifted youngsters (like Leonard Bernstein and Lukas Foss)—he was going to handle himself.

Whereas the other teachers had little trouble finding rooms where they could train and rehearse their students, we had to start the opera department virtually from scratch. Well-intentioned though he was, Koussevitzky—or "Koussie", as everyone called him behind his back—had not the faintest idea what an opera department needed to function properly. We did not have enough rehearsal rooms, we did not have enough pianos. But our complaints were soon attended to, and before long a dozen or more Baldwin spinets were installed in the gabled manor house and the adjoining barns and garages of the Tanglewood estate. For if there was one quality that distinguished Koussevitzky, it was an unflagging devotion to projects and persons he

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believed in. He had long been generous in commissioning and financing the publication of works by contemporary composers, and he was not going to be stingy with his latest brainchild.

Our main problem, however, was the absence of a theatre. All that was available was an open-air platform, covered by a large circus tent. When it rained, the marquee would gradually fill with water and begin to sag, and we would have to interrupt rehearsals to shake off the water. The tent was also too small to shelter the spectators, who had to sit, beyond its protective canopy, on chairs lined up on the grass.

For all these reasons we had to limit our ambitions to short excerpts and one-act operas. The first complete work chosen, in obvious deference to its composer, Paul Hindemith, was a musical and dramatic prank entitled *Hin und Zurück*. In this curious piece—the kind one is willing to see once but never again—the music, like the action, moves forward and then begins reversing backward, like a cinematographic reel, to its original point of departure. The result was clever, but that was about all one could say for it. I doubt that the performers enjoyed it any more than I, who had to play the four-hand piano part with the composer.

Hindemith—a very opinionated gentleman from Frankfurt who had been offered a teaching post at Yale—may have sensed our lukewarmness toward his elaborate leg-pull, for he was soon complaining to Koussevitzky about the opera department, warning him that if he wasn't careful, "it will develop an insatiable appetite and devour everything else around here." Unfortunately for himself, he was so overbearing in pressing his strong feelings on every possible subject that he finally got on Koussevitzky's nerves. They had a violent argument about something, and Hindemith left Tanglewood in a huff. He was never invited back.

IN JANUARY OF 1942 Koussevitzky lost Natalya Konstantinovna, the devoted wife and patron of the arts who had financed his orchestral beginnings in Moscow and Berlin and enabled him, after the Revolution, to found a publishing company in Paris for the editing of scores by contemporary composers. Her first name had been joined to his to form the composite "Seranak"—the name given to the splendid house they had bought near Lenox, in the Berkshires, not far from the Tanglewood estate. True to his generous form, the widower honoured Natalya's death by setting up a Koussevitzky Music Foundation, designed to sponsor works by new composers. The first beneficiaries were Samuel Barber, Benjamin Britten, and Nicolai Berezowsky.

Natalya Konstantinovna's death inevitably brought back to mind a story my Uncle Pierre told about his first visit to Koussevitzky in Boston, during a concert trip. Many of Koussevitzky's eccentricities could be traced back to a childlike need for reassurance, affection, and admiration. So Uncle Pierre was not unduly surprised when, over a cup of tea, his friend Sergei Alexandrovich began plying him with questions: "Tell me, Petya, you who know everybody in New York, you who circulate among musicians there, do they talk a lot about me and my organisation?"

The question, of course, was asked in Russian. It was an odd term to use, but whether he was speaking in his native Russian or in his fragmentary and often confusing English, Koussevitzky invariably referred to the Boston Symphony Orchestra as "my organisation."

Pierre, who knew exactly how to reply to this kind of question, undertook to reassure him: "Sergei Alexandrovich, let me tell you what everybody is saying in New York. All the musicians there are saying that Sergei Alexandrovich Koussevitzky is the only honest musician left in the world."

"Ah, no, no, Petya", said Koussevitzky, raising his hand in a gesture of protest. "No, no, Petya. *C'est exagéré!* You must not *exagérer*. I do not like *exagération*", he continued, as usual peppering his Russian speech with French words. "It is not true. I am not the only honest musician in the world. I will name you several other honest musicians. No, Petya, no. . . . Just a moment, I will name you some others. For instance, there is . . . uh . . . uh . . . uh . . . there is . . . for instance . . . uh. . . ." His eyes

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY

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wandered around the room, as he kept repeating "honest musicians? ... honest musicians?" But somehow they were unable to focus on the name of a single one.

Finally, unwilling to give up, Koussevitzky called to his wife, "Natashok! Natashok! Tell me, *dushka*, tell me, who are the other honest musicians?"

AMONG THE SURPRISES that lay in store for me when I moved to Boston in the autumn of 1942 was the presence in Cambridge of Nadia Boulanger. Scores of famous musicians had passed through her composition school at Fontainebleau, and now she had sought refuge from the Nazis in America.

I had once heard her speak in public before leaving Cleveland. To attend a talk given by this slender, alert, extremely vital lady, who was already a legend to musicians, was a real event, and I can still recall the sense of anticipation with which I waited for her to appear on the platform. The lecture that followed was dazzling, like a display of fireworks. She began with some general remarks about music and composers, dwelt for a moment on Rameau, then jumped to Brahms, moving on from him to Stravinsky (her favourite among the moderns). I listened with bated breath, thinking to myself: "Here is a real master! She is going to connect Rameau, Brahms, and Stravinsky in some marvellously new and illuminating way." Having done quite a bit of lecturing myself, I was familiar with the technique of building up interest and suspense. But to my surprise she mentioned another composer, devoted a few words to him, and then veered off in a totally different direction. The linking thread I had been eagerly expecting was never supplied, and the listeners were left with a series of disconnected strands of thought rather than with a closely woven and meaningful whole.

I was left wondering how a supremely gifted woman who had taught composition to so many successful musicians could be so lacking in a basic sense of organisation, and precisely of the kind that composition requires. There is a mystery here I have never been able to fathom. For it is a fact, and not a mere prejudice, that whereas there have been great women writers and poets, there has never been a great woman composer—even though music is an art in which women have long been encouraged to excel.

Be that as it may, Nadia Boulanger was as gifted a musician as it was ever my good fortune to meet. Our informal association was based on the fact that both of us were pianists. I soon discovered the first of her great gifts. As a sight-reader, she was a match for Dohnányi. She could read the manuscript of a modern orchestral score she had never before seen and reproduce it on the piano with miraculous facility. No new style seemed too unfamiliar or complex to throw her off her incredibly sure stride.

I made the second discovery a little later, when she asked me to join her in a concert, for which she chose some four-hand pieces by Schubert, as well as a Stravinsky sonata for two pianos. It became apparent to me during our very first rehearsal that this woman had the most precise sense of time divisions I had ever encountered in a human being. I had long prided myself on my excellence in this field, but Nadia Boulanger was quite clearly my peer, for she was sensitive to fractions of time of which I was hardly aware. To keep up with her I had to remain on the *qui vive* and exercise a maximum alertness.

The third of her distinctions was an encyclopaedic knowledge of music. She seemed to be at home with every style and to know all that was worth knowing about each and every one. She paraded this knowledge in the most stimulating way, giving one the impression that she knew everything. And the marvel of it was that it wasn't just an air, it was a fact. She did indeed know everything that was worth knowing, and she could impart it with a charm which kept it from being overpowering. No wonder so many musicians were delighted to study under her! She generated so much warmth and enthusiasm that one was prepared to forget and forgive everything—even the somewhat disconnected nature of her observations when she was on the lecture platform.

MY RELATIONS WITH Serge Koussevitzky grew so cordial that I was granted the special privilege of calling him Dyadya Servyzha (Uncle Serge) whenever I was invited to his home on Buckminster Road in the Boston suburb of Brookline, or when I went backstage after a concert at Symphony Hall to congratulate him on his latest performance. These pilgrimages to the green room, each marked by ceremonial Russian kisses on both cheeks and a gush of complimentary words about the glorious moment just experienced, were part of the ritual one had to observe if one wished to remain in the good graces of Sergei Alexandrovich, for they were not events to be taken lightly. He was always careful to note just who was present, and he listened with an attentive ear to one's rapturous remarks.

One had to say just the right thing for fear of offending this most sensitive of human beings—as my sister, Irene, once discovered to her cost at Tanglewood. After making the ritual visit to his green room at the end of a Thursday-night concert, she returned two days later to hear him conduct the same programme. Feeling particularly moved and, thinking to please him, she declared that what she had just heard was "the most beautiful concert I ever had the privilege of attending."

To which Koussevitzky replied in all seriousness: "And what was wrong with last Thursday's concert?"

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NOTES & TOPICS

An Obituary for Cambodia

The Revolution that Destroyed Itself

By Jean Lacouture

TO EXCLAIM "I was mistaken!" or "*On m'a trompé*" or "*Das haben wir nicht gewusst*" will not help to annul the consequences of bloody dictatorships, concealed beneath the virtuous disguise of "socialism", or "national-socialism", or whatever. The harm is done. Profound though that harm be, inexpressible in mere words, yet it should stand as a warning. To that end we must try to describe it, submit it to a post-mortem and, relentlessly condemning its shameful nature, uncover its horror in full. My latest book, *Survive le peuple cambodgie* (*Let the People of Cambodia Survive*), has just been published in Paris (Seuil); it is an account of the atrocious realities of life in Cambodia—observations based on numerous and detailed eye-witness accounts on the eve of yet another ordeal, the invasion and conquest by Viet Nam.

Shame alone would justify my writing this little book—which is, in essence, *un cri d'horreur*—the shame of having contributed—however little, however negligible the influence of the press in this case—to the establishment of one of the most repressive régimes in history. The shame, too, more widely shared though unrecognised, of living in a world where such things go on . . . and "go well", at that.

Must one now regret having supported a resistance movement, based in the forests, fighting against a grotesquely corrupt social order—an alienated, artificial régime, made up of middlemen and the agents of a foreign power? It is not easy to judge the point at which a resistance movement, inspired by ideals of justice, itself becomes a new system of oppression; not easy, but necessary. Otherwise what is the point of observers, of "experts"? Were we too slow in detecting the warped mentality of those heroic guerrillas, abruptly given total power which they totally abused? Did we underestimate the full implications, the full consequences of that shattering, forced deportation of the people of Phnom Penh—that sociological defenestration without precedent in history? We should have spoken out sooner, louder and more clearly.

This feeling of urgency, of the moral obligation to speak for the Cambodian People, reduced now to slavery in the name of "Revolution", is not inspired solely by shame. It springs, too, from a certain concept of the journalist's responsibility and the journalistic profession. At a time when one sees some of one's colleagues becoming agents of a police-state, it is vital to show that the written word is both a commitment and a bond.

Nikita Khrushchev's speech to the Soviet Communist Party's 20th Congress did not bring Stalin's millions of victims back to life, nor did it exculpate Stalin's successor from his part in the crimes he described. It was, none the less, a great and historic act which was a contribution to restoring the health of Soviet society as a whole. I do not aspire to produce such far-reaching effects. However, if words lent support to a perverted cause, might not yet other words help to uncover corruption while also discerning hope?

As far as self-criticism goes, it is both feeble and useless to claim that we were misled, cheated, thus becoming the unwitting vehicles for mendacious and criminal propaganda, naive spokesmen for Tyranny-in-the-name-of-Freedom. Such claims could only be justified if, in making them, we sought and found release—if, with our vision thus newly cleansed, unencumbered and sharpened, we firmly resolved to see the world differently after this terrible Cambodian misunderstanding.

WE HAD KNOWN for some time that Phnom Penh would fall sooner or later to the guerillas. We expected it, we wanted it to happen as soon as possible; not only because we had taken the revolutionary side against Lon Nol's deplorable régime, but also because of the heavy and unnecessary loss of life caused by the guerrillas' rocket attacks on the capital, which was itself threatened with destruction.

We in Paris heard—in the early afternoon of 17 April 1975—that the *petits hommes*, sprung from the forests, had finally reached the capital. Everyone breathed more easily, everyone hoped. Immediately after, however, strange reports began to circulate:

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> "Phnom Penh has been evacuated, emptied.... The population has been forced to leave the city with all possible haste to escape American bombing...."

Thus ran the radio report, quoting sources in Thailand. But we refused to accept it. Phnom Penh's two-and-a-half million people deprived of their homes, driven out into the ricefields—not by the enemy but by their own liberators? *Impossible.*

Dispatch after dispatch confirmed our worst fears. Within the space of a few hours, the entire population of the capital had been forced to flee, threatened at gun-point by their "liberators." Women, children, the old, the sick and the wounded—all had to run for their lives. In vast columns, they took to the four main highways that leave Phnom Penh for the provinces, embarking on routes which shortly before had been battlefields, where the verges and even the road surface were still littered with mines.

Once the Khmer revolution was launched, it showed its originality by introducing a series of measures and regulations quite unprecedented in their totalitarian harshness:

(1) Roughly 80% of the population was assigned to work in the paddy-fields. The great majority had only adapted to urban life in the relatively recent past, and the effort required to re-adapt once again soon proved unbearable. They were faced with ten hours of navvying and agricultural work a day in temperatures of 30–40°C. Their daily food ration was reduced to two bowls of rice or clear soup, and it was totally forbidden to supplement this Draconian regimen either by fishing (which would have been easy in a country that is frequently flooded), by hunting, or by gathering. It was also forbidden to use "collective property", earmarked as it was for the revolutionary cadres alone. In addition to all this, the slightest offence could meet with an immediate death sentence as the Angkar militiamen shot "lazy" workers, "thieves" or "fornicators" without mercy. Bearing all this in mind, one can get some idea of the average Khmer citizen's "life in the country" in 1978.

(2) The complete abolition of family life. In many production centres, men and women were assigned to separate "brigades", often far apart. Moreover, at the age of eight in some sectors, twelve in others, the children were torn from their schools—education was confined to the teaching of the "rejuvenated" Khmer language and the learning by rote of "patriotic" songs. They were then assigned to work in production: in factories, repair workshops, or agricultural cooperatives—where they were sometimes harnessed to the plough.... Such were the methods by which "a new generation was to be forged", the generation entrusted with the building of "the new Kampuchea", which as the population was told by some Khmer revolutionaries "only needs one-and-a-half to two million Cambodians to build it up...."

(3) An end to all secondary and higher education and to research, which were considered "reactionary", the "results of colonialism and imperialism." Students and professors who had not been actively involved on behalf of the victors were hunted down, sent to the most unhealthy zones and executed on the most trifling pretexts.

(4) The destruction of all religious life. The "Bonzes" (Buddhist priests) and other priests (the Muslim Imams, for instance who were quite numerous on account of the sizeable Malaysian community in the Tonlé-Sap region in particular) were forbidden to show their identity in the traditional fashion and were forced into agricultural work. The Pagodas and the Mosques, meanwhile, had been turned into grain silos, pig-sties, or stables. One has to have known Cambodia when it was still its real self to understand how gross an attack on popular culture this religious ban constitutes. Radical reforms were undoubtedly needed in Cambodia, but surely not this pitiful copy of Mao's (or the Gang of Four's) China from 1965–69!

A WORD OF WARNING: when I talk of liquidation, annihilation, or suppression in the new Cambodia, these words are used in an absolutely literal sense. In drawing on the concepts of "class warfare" or the "classless society", two generations of revolutionaries since Marx have, on occasion, reached extreme conclusions: for example, Stalin's drive in the late 1920s to rid Russia of the "kulaks." Nevertheless, before the appearance of this tragic group, schooled in Paris and Phnom Penh's pedagogical institute in the 1950s, no one had dared translate the "liquidation of a class" into the physical annihilation, the systematic massacre of a whole society. Stupidity almost always lies at the root of all crime. But has it ever played the overwhelming role it did in this case? Every revolution produces and spews out its bloody executioners. Has this revolution, then, produced something quite new?

Contemporary systems of primitive plagiarists have indeed managed to invent something of their very own: new forms of capital punishment. Ranging from Videla's Argentina to Vorster's South Africa, new tortures are being invented all over the world. But in Cambodia they don't bother with such a roundabout approach: why make the suspect talk, what need of "confessions"? The victim stands condemned already. So to demonstrate their resourcefulness in saving ammunition,

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they have, in three years (though they most probably dealt with several of our colleagues in the resistance movement in this fashion from 1971 onwards), perfected half-a-dozen fatal tortures:

The spinning-top. In this one the victim is killed by a blow to the nape of the neck with a spade. Before collapsing, the unfortunate victim spins round on himself like a top. A Cambodian I spoke with, who had seen several of his village neighbours executed in this way, said to me, "It's the most popular method. . . . "

The sack. This method does most justice to the inventive genius of the "Red Khmers", and it will, perhaps, ensure their experiment a lasting place in the History of Revolution. The condemned man is bound and a transparent plastic bag put over his head and tied round the neck. The victim soon runs out of oxygen and rolls on the ground, trying to bite open the sack to breathe. Not a single grimace, not a single dying contortion is spared the crowd, "invited" to witness the execution.

The Swing. The "class enemy" has his feet and wrists tied to each other. After he has been dragged along behind some vehicle or other, the bloody ring which is his body is hung from a branch till death releases him. Some of the more imaginative, folklore-minded executioners cut out the victim's entrails or heart (before he dies) and have been known to eat them. . . .

Obviously most of these hundreds of thousands—no, two million—victims were not executed but doomed to a slow death by deportation, by inhuman pressures, by overwork and undernourishment, through lack of medicine. The deaths of these countless victims enabled Pol Pot to dream of seeing Cambodia, in his lifetime, transformed into a "classless society" consisting merely of party members and the child-slaves who populated the fields and the workshops.

HOW CAN WE COUNT the human cost of that exodus in April 1975? How many of those four million city-dwellers can have survived, thrown into the ricefields in the April heat (when temperatures reach over 40° in the shade, the highest of the year) without provisions, with only a few gathered fruits to eat and stagnant pond water to drink, and with no quinine? Would 10% of them have died in the first weeks, 30% in the first few months? After making enquiries in the refugee camps, the American *Caritas* groups in Bangkok estimated more than a million dead by the end of 1975. A number of Western observers have put the death toll at double that figure by the end of 1978.

APART FROM the countless deaths, the Cambodian genocide (or "self-genocide") has also had secondary effects: by forcing children of ten and eleven into work much harsher than that which wracked generations of English and French adolescents in the 19th century, the health of Cambodia's children has been ruined. Moreover, the damage done to women's fertility is appalling.

At a conference in Oslo in April 1978, Dr Oum Nal declared that some 90% of Cambodia's young women had ceased to menstruate. This widespread amenorrhoea among Khmer women has been, in his view, caused primarily by the terrible psychic upheaval provoked by the deportations, the mass executions, the separation and dislocation of families—all of which could not fail to disrupt the body's neuro-endocrine balance. "It is my belief", the doctor added, "that as long as these women and girls remain in deportation, barely surviving in a state of extreme undernourishment and mental anguish, they will be unable to bear children—on that I am quite ready to give my word of honour as a doctor. . . . "

I RECEIVED (on 1 May 1978) a shattering letter from the wife of a man who had been one of the Khmer revolution's most long-standing supporters—an old comrade of Saloth Sar, Ieng Sary, and Khieu Samphan. Some months after the capture of Phnom Penh and the establishment of the Revolutionary Government—to whose victory

'I am a revolutionary
who is profoundly conservative.'

Pierre-Joseph PROUDHON

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he had contributed as best he could—he left for home to "join in the building of a democratic Kampuchea, in the paddy-fields", though his talents and his numerous contacts in Europe and the rest of the world would have really made him more useful to the cause abroad than at home. In her letter his wife asked: "What has happened to him? Do you know? I can no longer bear this silence! . . . "

No one has heard any news of him since he set foot on Cambodian soil at the end of 1975. Not a word to his wife, his family, or his old comrades who remained in Europe. Just silence—the total silence of some Trappist monastery gone mad. Two years ago I received the following query from a Cambodian student in Paris after the *Nouvel Observateur* had published an article of mine attacking Khmer totalitarianism. "Do you think", he wrote, "that all our compatriots who returned home were, in fact, just throwing themselves into the wolf's jaws?" At the time I was not sure. Now I am convinced that it was so.

"Wolf-state" or "Moloch-state": a state which swallows its citizens, shrouding them in a veil of silence, total silence. (From time to time one may hear from an Egyptian diplomat or a Yugoslav journalist that so-and-so is still alive. . . .) But this was a state which refused all communication, all human exchange between those surviving on its soil and those abroad who love them, and long to see them again. Wolf-state, Moloch-state, one which prohibits that elementary, fundamental human relationship which neither Hitler nor Stalin annihilated to such an extent.

It was not the new Cambodia's refusal to receive serious, unbiased investigators or journalists so much as this silence between Khmers themselves which to us seemed so hateful, so inhuman. Even France under Nazi occupation had recourse to "inter-zonal permits." In Buchenwald the deportee Leon Blum could send some news to France, receive news from it. It is possible to draw up a rough list of the victims of Videla and Pinochet, those of Sekou Touré. The songs of the tortured and the condemned filter out from South Africa's prisons, and the cries of the *zeks* can be heard from the camps of the Gulag. China's dissidents are beginning to be heard, and sometimes now a name can be put to some of the dozens of corpses found in the streets of Addis Ababa—people exterminated by the police of Messrs Brezhnev and Castro's friends. But from Cambodia, nothing. Nothing but the distant sound of exhausted breathing, the anonymous toil of countless thousands in the paddy-fields; nothing but the all-encompassing silence of the cities, not even the death-rattle of those executed by the sack—nothing but the coarse laughter of Comrade Pol Pot.

CONFRONTED by the spectacle of this country bolted and barred against the outside world, a country oozing fear and wrapped up in chauvinistic paranoia, one might have expected "progressive" world opinion to defend the victims against their executioners—that same "progressive opinion" which so long denied the existence of the Soviet camps and which then discovered Solzhenitsyn's books as "revelations", books which in reality only added the seal of genius to facts long known by those who wanted to know—that same "progressive opinion" which believed it had discovered the socialist paradise in China (till the Lin Piao affair and the "plot of the Gang of Four" tore the mask from the "Cultural Revolution") —that opinion which, after half-a-century of unshakable naivety, seemed, finally, to have discovered that the words *Revolution* and *Socialism* can mask the worst tyrannies.

But it was an illusion—yet another illusion. After Fascism, which held so many fine spirits spellbound in the 1930s, even after Stalinism which fascinated so many *maîtres à penser* in the 1940s, after an Imperialism of sorts (which corrupted Steinbeck for one) —the Cambodian genocide has, in turn, found its own sophists.

What do we hear in reply to our accusations, which multiply unceasingly as more and more evidence becomes available (the flood of refugees grows, as does their despair, and evidence is collected with increasing efficiency, particularly since Amnesty International became involved)? The response to our accusations is as unexpected as it is heartbreaking: "You've got no proof. . . . Have you been there? . . . Have you seen it yourself ? . . ." You quote eye-witness reports, "But there are other reports which tell a quite different story. . . . Anyway, refugees' accounts are unreliable. They want to attract attention. . . . "

But even sadder, and more lamentable, is the attitude to the Cambodian genocide taken by a number of American intellectuals, who are against Washington's strategy in Asia—the most noted and respectable being, without doubt, Noam Chomsky.

The author of *Cartesian Linguistics*, with whom I have had friendly contacts since the Viet Nam war, now, in the course of a long polemic, both private and public (my article appeared in the *New York Review of Books*, his in *The Nation*), has deployed all the resources of his dialectical mind to show me and the scientific and progressive community in America that it is not possible to make concrete accusations against a country which no serious investigator has been able to visit, especially when other "eye-witness accounts" throw doubts on the terrible reports I quote. . . .

But genocide is genocide—whether in Dachau or Pretoria, Armenia or Transylvania, in Equatorial Guinea or in Cambodia.

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F. R. Leavis

An Appreciation—By JOHN HARVEY

OPINIONS ABOUT F. R. Leavis have been so fiercely divided that most discussions of him could hardly be called debate. A year after his death is perhaps a good time to attempt an appreciation of the personality, and the work, which made so great a difference to English criticism.

He is known as a harsh critic; but the harshness and pessimism in his work are scarcely surprising when one considers the start he had to his adult life. He came up to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, with a Scholarship from the Perse School in 1914, and had barely matriculated when war was declared. He was a conscientious objector, and joined the Friends' Ambulance Unit as a stretcher-bearer. His work was at least as dangerous as that of the combatants, and it wouldn't be easy to imagine the impact of it on a nineteen-year-old: he had to be always where the fighting was worst and the injuries most appalling. I believe that on one occasion, after being shunted all night from one goods yard to another through a city being bombed, shut in cattle-trucks crowded with the wounded and dying, he was for a month unable to speak at all. He returned from the war severely shell-shocked and scarcely able to talk, and for the rest of his life suffered from insomnia.

It hardly then needs special explanation that, resuming his studies, he got only a II.2 when he took Part I of the History Tripos in 1919. He changed to the newly-formed English course, which had just escaped from its first position as an option within the Modern and Medieval Languages Tripos and was presided over by the kindly belle-lettrism of "Q" (Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch). Leavis took the English Tripos in 1921. On the morning of his first examination, on 23 May, his father was crossing the road after wishing him well, when he was killed in a traffic accident, with Leavis standing by; Leavis sat his papers, and got a First. In a letter to F. L. Attenborough, the Fellow in English at Emmanuel, Q reported of Leavis's Tripos:

"Leavis did quite well in the Tripos, especially in the earlier papers which were consistently good. There was quality in them too: and if they were, here and there, a trifle thin, one felt that the man had spent time in trying to express himself well. On the last (the Criticism) paper he collapsed. But knowing the circumstances, and finding on enquiry that in the Mays his Criticism paper had led the whole field, I hadn't the faintest compunction in signing him up for a First—even apart from the pluck of the whole performance, which was astonishing. (I lost my father in my last year at Oxford, and know what it means.)"

Q's letter was presumably a reference for the Research Studentship which Leavis was presently awarded; it continues, shedding an interesting light on the impression the young Leavis made:

"I suppose Leavis was too shy to worry me personally for advice: and you know that under pretty constant bombardment by those who are not shy I haven't the time to look up those who are. But I should be happy to make amends if given the chance of supervising his work for a research degree. He has suggested a very good subject, and I know enough of him to be pretty sure he would make a good fist of it.

We have had by Heaven's grace some very good men among our few early researchers in English (Dobrée, Colleer Abbott, Miles, Herman). I believe that when their stuff sees print we shall be able to claim a modest success: and it would be pleasant to admit Leavis to the team."

There is some poignancy, now, in the impression the letter gives of the intimacy and confidence of the new subject.

Leavis's PhD thesis, on "The Relation of Journalism to Literature", is perhaps most interesting for its appreciation of early pamphleteering literature, by Milton among others—the genre in which, later, Leavis himself developed a genius.

He took his PhD in 1924, and in 1925 began teaching as a Faculty Probationary Lecturer. His first lectures were on 18th-century Literature, but

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in his second year and after he taught chiefly on Modern Poetry and Modern Novels: he was, conspicuously, the only member of the Faculty to offer teaching on 20th-century writing.

BY THE TIME his Lectureship expired—he gave the last course in 1932—he had criticised with sufficient effectiveness for various colleagues to wish him out of Cambridge, and there was a generous rallying-round to try and secure a Chair for him in South Africa or Australia. Believing that if his ambitions for English teaching were to have any real effect, it must be at Cambridge, he hung on, existing on the small fees from supervising. Not surprisingly his supervisions were in demand, and in the year in which his Faculty post ended he was invited to direct studies in English at Downing. At Emmanuel, his relations with H. S. Bennett, who had been appointed Director of Studies in the year that Leavis began his Probationary Lectureship, had become bitter. Leavis was never elected to a Fellowship, and it is clear that beyond the Research Studentship (£150 for two years) he had no support from the College. He used to say that he first heard that his teaching was no longer wanted at Emmanuel when the Master met him in Front Court with "Ah, Leavis, we have been wondering where to put your books." He would add that his study had been reassigned and reoccupied, and his books heaped in a corridor.

In 1935 he was elected to a College Lectureship at Downing, and in 1936 to a Fellowship, and to a Lectureship in the English Faculty. He had missed several previous appointments and been pressed to go; but on this occasion Q, who normally ducked Faculty business, was sufficiently concerned to travel up from a house party to attend the final meeting of the Appointments Committee. At the age of 41, after five years with only a College appointment, Leavis began the full lectureship he was to hold until 1959. Later he added ten years and more to the delays in his official career; but if the exaggeration does not reflect history, it does show the impact made on him by the force of the ill-will he had incurred, and the bitter Faculty determination to "stop" him.

Leavis had married in 1929 and begun serious publication in 1930. In 1932 the periodical *Scrutiny* was started by L. C. Knights and Donald Culver, largely with the aim of getting Leavis into print: he contributed the leading critical articles in the first two numbers, and in the third became an editor. Much of his *Scrutiny* writing was done with an eye also on book publication, and from 1930 on there followed the steady progress of critical books, almost all of which have been continuously in print since they first appeared.

His principal books were *New Bearings in English Verse* (1932), *Revaluation*, a critical history of English poetry (1936), *Education and the University* (1943), *The Great Tradition*, an account of the 19th-century novel (1948), and *The Common Pursuit* (1952), a collection of critical essays. In two particular ways his criticism was decisive—his early championing of T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence, and his arguing of the proper organisation and function, and the importance, of English Literature as a university subject. But also influential were his appraisals of Milton, Keats, Shelley, Dickens, George Eliot, Hopkins, James, Conrad. . . .

Those who think him negative or narrow should consider the number and diversity of the authors to the appreciation of whom he has made an important difference. *The Common Pursuit* is perhaps the best book to go to, to see quickly the range and the principal themes of his thought, and the originality, pith, and force of personality of his prose. His best writing combines a collected thoughtfulness of great precision and weight with both vehemence and an intense dry vivacity, making him the strongest individual voice in the English prose of the last four decades.

AS AN UNDERGRADUATE I was able to go regularly to his seminars at Downing in the early 1960s, when he would have been close to 70. What I remember of his person is of course the famous open-necked shirt and sandals, worn through all weathers; the extreme fitness and litheness, and the skin as tanned as a gardener's; after the baldness, the train of grey hair worn long at the back. And principally what is not mentioned in descriptions of him, the extremely handsome and strong head. I believe he was short-sighted, but his gaze was disconcertingly level, penetrating and dry, and a mere reconnoitring glance, as he came into a room, could be frighteningly sharp. In his talk, what at the time made the strongest impression was the amused and more or less scathing personalities: "The Vice-Chancellor asked me what I thought of Professor Y . . . but he came back to it a third time, so I said, 'Well, if you really want to know, I think he's vulgar—brassy—and a bounder!'" "If a talented monkey could write novels, these are what you would get: it's the same mimicry—and the same lasciviousness!" I cannot register in type the effect of his accent, an odd deliberate cultivated Cambridgeshire, lingering on final vowels ("brass-y") with peculiar damningness.

The great strength of the seminars was his commentaries on the old dating sheets he had to hand. He would go through the miscellaneous excerpts and stanzas, characterising and identifying from phrase to phrase in a way that not only enhanced and "placed" the passage itself, but also made immediate and formidable the whole past ethos out of which the passage came. The zest and illuminat-

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ingness of this extempore criticism, simply of whatever cropped up on the sheet, is not I think to be guessed from his published work, where he writes normally with the driving urgency of a particular "thing that needs saying."

Less valuable, and occupying a larger part of the seminar hours, were the general reflections that became, through a term, repetitive. In my time his main theme was T. S. Eliot ("Tom. Petering out like that! How many poems has he written since the *Four Quartets*?!"), and in particular Eliot's "corruption, decay and inward mess." Circlingly, against I suppose strong resistances, he was developing the negative diagnosis of Eliot's "case" which is expressed, in a veiled way, in his late criticism. Periodically he would reproach himself for talking all the time; but his retorts to questions were prompt and final, and we were too daunted and entranced to cooperate in debate.

Three years before he retired he was conceded a Readership, and this was the most recognition he ever had in Cambridge. After his retirement he was a visiting Professor at several universities, including, happily, Bristol and York, where the shaping of the English courses had been greatly influenced by his thought. He continued to publish criticism of considerable force until the year before he died.

LEAVIS'S EARLY CRITICISM was chiefly of poetry. He wrote on many poets, and I could not represent adequately, in summary, his judgments on writers as diverse as Jonson, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth. But in any case both the perceptiveness and the provocativeness of his local comment are well known now, and what rather needs to be urged is the coherence and impressiveness of the general thought evolving through the consecutive essays—in a fundamental investigation constantly renewed and extended.

The greatest problem of criticism has always been to work with a sound understanding of the relationship between literary qualities and the values of life in general; the major errors have come either from treating literature too simply in terms of general ethics, or from trying to explain literary values in dissociation from other values. What Leavis developed was a language for evaluating emotion—in terms essentially of one's attitude to one's own emotions: was one nourishing them for their own sake or for the pleasure of the ego, or were they truly defined by their object? Underpinning the particular discussions he had a general account of the interdependence between fine distinctions of emotion and fine distinctions of language in any culture. He was then able to demonstrate that the nuances of suggestion that made particular words right or wrong in poetry did so because they conveyed acceptable or unacceptable attitudes to emotion, in the process of expressing it. Involved in this criticism was a picture of the individual nature, which could either be shapeless and chaotic, at the mercy of every whim of the ego, or could have the delicate whole organisation that would make fine and right feeling possible: the coherence and delicacy of this organisation being married, again, to the coherence and delicacy with which language was used—ideally in poetry.

Of course such an account does not cover all the ground; Leavis had a subtle supporting analysis of metaphor and movement, and of the distinction between language that asserted or gestured towards its meaning and language which, through a complex analogical play, came closer to embodying its meaning. My summary is dense but crude; but it may suggest the way in which Leavis's whole analysis gave something like a full account of the complex relations between values in poetry and values in life. The reader will find that Leavis's formulation actually is subtler and more complete than any given previously—whether by Aristotle, Horace, Johnson or Coleridge; and it is possible to argue that in this central question of critical thought, Leavis "got it right."

From the 1940s he was increasingly interested in the novel, and the impact of his criticism shows in the number of classics that owe a large part of their present currency to him—*Hard Times*, *Nostromo*, *Portrait of a Lady*, *The Rainbow*. However he did not often give to novelistic prose the searching particularity of analysis he had regularly given to poetry, and his general description of fiction does not have the powerful keenness and coherence of his earlier criticism. His account of fiction presses the argument that a great novel is to be appreciated as a kind of poem, or "extended metaphor": he refers only negatively to the conception of the novel as a world of "real" people governed by the probabilities of "real" life. In his detailed criticism, on the other hand, it is clear that his genius is for conveying the accuracy of the novelist's insight into the way in which, from day to day, people actually make their own fates—it is a genius adapted best to the realistic psychological novel, and his long chapter on George Eliot in *The Great Tradition* is a masterpiece of criticism.

THE CLAIM Leavis made for the novels he especially admired was that they gave the most profound criticism available of the phase of civilisation that had produced them. This conception of what masterpieces do—the creative criticism of civilisation—saves literature from being either imprisoned in its own time, or lost in "eternal verity", and it is realised with great impressiveness in his commentaries on *Little Dorrit* and *Women in Love*. But, as Leavis's primary criterion, it has the air of meeting all needs—while it does not, for

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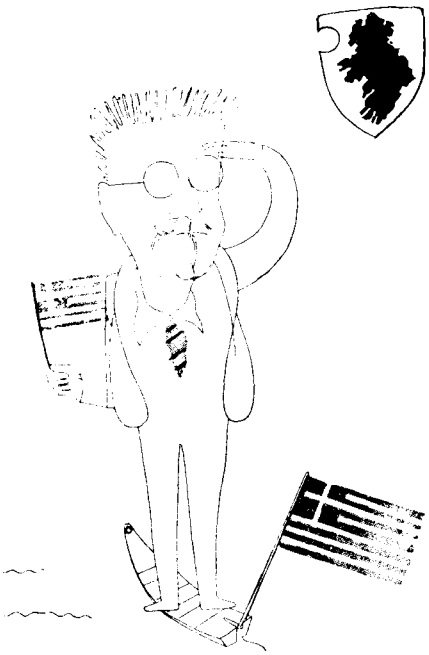

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instance, meet all the issues raised by great tragic art. It may be recalled that at no time in his career did Leavis discuss at length *Hamlet*, *King Lear* or *Macbeth*.

The conception of literature as the criticism of civilisation reflected Leavis's concern, in his broader social writing, with the crisis of modern culture. Article after article in the early numbers of *Scrutiny* recorded how technological and urban overdevelopment, and the predominance of a new rootless "mass" culture, had almost destroyed the old world of humane values, which had its roots in the "organic" agricultural community. In a world of broken-up and deadening work, aimless leisure, and mass cultural disinheritance, education became supremely important, and in education the study of literature had special value because literature was the finest life of the civilisation which had gone—and yet stayed alive and influential while the literature was read.

From this position Leavis developed his whole educational programme, concentrating on the university syllabus in English literature: for which he had clearer and more productive intentions than anyone else. The broader social analysis was often attacked, especially by Marxist critics, as romanticising the past in the interests of a superficial understanding of industrial society. Leavis, in reply, argued that the Marxist view was superficial, since the communal possession of industry, though desirable, could not in itself compensate for the whole lost world of "organic" values. His criticism of the various political philosophies, as having no subtle or sufficient appreciation of the human values they were supposed to serve, may have been right; but the connection between the "organic community" and the literature he most admired was indirect. He wrote as though he wished he could have lived in such a community; and yet it is hard on reflection to imagine that he would have been happy there.

In his later writings Leavis rested value chiefly on a union of qualities—wonder, spontaneity, creativity, disinterestedness—which he found presented with most power in the directly combative art of Blake, Dickens and Lawrence. These late books (*Nor Shall My Sword*, *The Living Principle*, *Thought, Words and Creativity*) have been much criticised, and it is true that in them Leavis uses his key authors primarily as a way of developing the whole "criticism of civilisation" that had become his own main preoccupation. But though the books are for that reason unsatisfying as literary criticism, it is surely fair to consider also the larger argument they urge; and what then strikes the reader is a new degree of hopefulness in Leavis's thought. His main investment is no longer in a rural community that cannot be restored, or in an anti-industrialism ensuring nothing but defeat: he concentrates more and more on defining and evoking the qualities, in the spirit in which life is lived, that could be permanent and could go on giving meaning to life, however "technological" it becomes. In his recent Dickens criticism, the engineer-inventor Daniel Doyce (in *Little Dorrit*) has a positive halo one couldn't have imagined in Leavis's earlier work. He does then give grounds for the severely qualified optimism he expresses—as well as for the gravity of his alarm. Many writers have deplored the onward machine rush of our world, but the reader who compares them will find in Leavis a deeper disquiet, a more serious anxiety for civilisation.

I HAVE TRIED to give some outline of Leavis's thought, but I have not sufficiently conveyed the peculiar character, the "feel" of his writing—the unremitting urgency of insistence, the perpetual mental strife, in one arena after another, *for* this, *against* that. The at once questing and warring force in all his prose makes one ask: what *is* the large impulsion that drives his criticism on? Probably there is no one short answer, but as bearing at least on the question, I shall mention two antithetical themes which run through his criticism like arteries.

When he is writing about individuals, the term he returns to, time and again, is "ego." The novelist on whom he writes best of all is, I think, George Eliot, and George Eliot has a marked severe inquisitive watchfulness as to the poses and indulgences of the selfish ego—its insidious invasion of real emotions, its unobserved action in the best natures, its contamination of conscience. This especially is what she is passionately interested in, and best on, and what in her Leavis is best on.

Clearly he is so because that energy of introspective moral vigilance was something that he had himself independently. It is very marked for instance in his essay on *Othello*, where Othello's egotism is pinned down and indicted with an emphasis and searchingness that go beyond the Eliot essay that must have inspired him ("Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca"). But however strong Leavis's case may be, it is hard to believe that any other critic would have located the tragic centre of the play in Othello's *egotism* to the extent that he does (he makes the play's presentation of jealousy seem narrower than it need; and also, by making it what we expect from Othello, he takes away the shock of the egotism in Othello's reaction to having killed his wife).

When he criticises George Eliot, it is precisely for giving in to her ego—in the self-dramatisation that mars her noble heroes and heroines. In his criticism of Milton, he is fundamentally criticising the Grand Style because he sees it as the style of a grand egotism (he insists that Milton's egotism is grand). In very many of Leavis's famous demotions and demolitions, the root fault found is failure to

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restrain an exceptionally powerful inborn egotism: such a failure is behind the self-enjoying "afflatus" of Shelley's verse, behind the maddened contempt in Swift's satire. And as I indicated earlier Leavis's whole theory of the close relation between quality of language and quality of feeling is based on an untiring alertness to the subtle ways in which the ego interferes with feelings and words.

The "ego" is his serpent. And the corollary of this, in his writing on Blake and in his more recent criticism in general, is the special value—really a kind of holiness—given to the innocent, wondering condition of being "ego-free."

THE OTHER, complementary theme is indicated in the special charge the word "civilisation" has for Leavis. The negative side to that concern shows in his despair about the 20th century; the positive shows in the way that, with poet after poet, when he defines the quality that moves him most, it proves to be the fineness of a whole culture—"Marvell's seriousness is the finer wisdom of a ripe civilisation." It might suggest an uncharacteristic impracticality to say that in all his criticism Leavis is fundamentally in quest of an ideal society: but there is a quest, and I think a real impatience or even hunger in his keenness to seize hold of and convey the distinct great qualities of different phases of culture. Henry James mattered for Leavis chiefly because of his "constant profound pondering of the nature of civilised society and of the possibility of imagining a finer civilisation than any he knew", and that concern was Leavis's also. In the poetry of Ben Jonson he admired most the strain in which "the English poet . . . enters into an ideal community, conceived of as something with which contemporary life and manners may and should have close relations." And he said of Alexander Pope's vision of the conditions and values of Augustan society, "his contemplation is religious in its seriousness."

What is both idiosyncratic and profound in Leavis's own best writing is the presence of a religious impulse which in another age might have been directed to God, but is here directed to civilisation: this being for him not just a secular matter, as his full discussion of Pope shows. (The more overt and general religious motive in the later books I find also more vague and more uneasy—the reiterative, coiling, self-quoting prose giving, through all the insistence, an odd effect of frustration.)

It is not surprising that such an abiding preoccupation with the damage done by the single ego should be complemented by a passion of concern for the large but delicate, collaborative, personal-and-impersonal creation that a civilisation is; the

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juxtaposition does not, of course, "sum up" Leavis. As to "ego", clearly he was a man who had himself a formidable energy of will and ego, and was troubled by these things and always at war with them: all his writing has that tension, and shows I think also that his victory over ego was always at best an equivocal one.

As to why his positive concern was so concentrated on "civilisation", one should perhaps go back to his experience of the war. In the trenches and the hospital-trains, through the interminable horrors, civilised life—having as true and profound a basis as possible—must have been something that he yearned for with a force and depth one could not exaggerate; and presumably this concern is tied especially to literature because what he did to escape, when he could, was to read. Reading had *been* civilisation for him.

If Leavis's main prepossessions sometimes slanted his judgments, they gave him his insights. He was a critic who had "seen life."

THIS THOUGHT, so large in its scope and so generous in its appreciation of literature, was, as is generally known, produced in an immediate drama of critical and personal hostilities that often suggested a smaller intensity. The Leavises wrote always as though from a small armed citadel, without allies, under a permanent vicious blockade. To some extent, of course, this really was their situation—I imagine that in the early years it had very much been so—but there is no doubt that they also found it congenial, and that in later years at least they let matters arrange themselves so as to make their isolation more complete. At the end of their career, while their work had demonstrably had wide influence and recognition, they felt they had been betrayed by almost everyone who had worked closely with them. This was tragic, but a component of the tragedy was the ease with which they severed long-established ties—with people who, they must have known, admired them very greatly.

If the isolation was in part congenial, it was also productive; in the Retrospect to *Scrutiny* Leavis acknowledged that it had been easier, as a resented outsider, to *be* a critic; and it may also be that the sympathetic and generous side of his nature, disappointed and blocked in actual relations, was able to expand only with literature—and did expand there wonderfully, giving his criticism, which draws so much of its energy from exasperation, its paradoxical largeness. But hard-pressed urgency in fighting for a particular case often meant, also, that he did not try to tell the whole truth about an author, and often did not give the classically complete and well-judged criticism that he—and hardly anyone else—could have given. He

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did write such a criticism of George Eliot, but of Lawrence he did not. What especially thrived, in his willed and beleaguered isolation, was a generalised pessimism which closed his curiosity, and narrowed the truth of his more ambitious literary and social thought.

BUT TO PRESENT matters only in such a sombre light would be unjust: it would endorse the widely current picture of him as a man morose with injury, when the main impression he made was of someone extremely hard-bitten, but also extremely alive and lively. So far as I have seen, his teaching sessions have been described as solemn occasions, which they were not. He would open his mail in the lecture-hall, and comment. A quality that made a strong impression, and hasn't been recorded, was his mischievousness. Of the famous first lines of "The World", by the Welsh poet Vaughan, that used to be so plangently quoted,

I saw Eternity the other night
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,

he would say "Well—the man who said that could say anything." Of Shakespeare's plays he would recommend especially *Measure for Measure*. "What play can you say is greater?"—a puckish grin—"*King Lear*?" A parting shot as he mounted his bike and accelerated, was "X thinks of course that Mrs Gaskell is a great novelist. But she isn't a great novelist—she's a *bore*!"

He closed his last official lecture in Cambridge with an attack on the view that the good and bad qualities of literature were some sort of moral absolute—a naivety sometimes attributed to him. To clinch the point, he quoted Santayana's observation on ethical absolutism, to the effect that saying something is good in itself or bad in itself is like saying that whisky isn't intoxicating to you or intoxicating to me but stands there dead drunk in the bottle. Then he made some difficulty in switching off the light at the lectern, muttered *sotto voce* "'Put out the light'", and left.

Patterns of Violence

Ireland & History—By JOHN BOSSY

HERE WE HAVE three very different books with an object in common—to see what historians can do to help the people or peoples of Ireland, in the case of two of them especially of Northern Ireland, to cope with their present situation and likely future. Having spent twelve years in Belfast, and finding myself still with a desperate hankering after the sound of Ulster voices, I warm to their efforts; the more so that all of them avoid the various forms of patronising, reactionary or progressive, which inhabitants of the province and the island have had to put up with from a long line of Englishmen, most recently from Prime Ministers and correspondents for *The Guardian*. To quote A. T. Q. Stewart (a native):

> "The behaviour of people on these frontiers is perfectly rational, not only in terms of history but of contemporary politics; it is not the mark of too much or too little Christianity, or of any kind of attitude not found in the rest of the human race."

The first thing Magnus Magnusson noticed when he went to Dublin on the trip which resulted in a radio series and in *Landlord or Tenant? A View of Irish History*,[1] was a Guinness advertisement saying *"Take up Irish History tonight."* He was on the way to talk to Irish historians and found them serious, thoughtful people, concerned with their documents and with conveying to students in Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Coleraine, Galway, a balanced, cautious view of the island's past. He has tried, sensibly though naturally enough rather superficially, to help the process get to a wider audience by putting what he has found into a book.

It is not very accurately titled. You will not find a connected account of Irish agrarian problems in it, only (on p. 11 and again on p. 105) the information that an unnamed "young scholar" has been on circuit reading a paper called "Predatory Peasants and Downtrodden Landlords", in the service of more general rehabilitation of the land-owning gentry and their contribution to Irish prosperity. As this example suggests, most of the revisions said to be gaining ground in Irish history are more or less undermining of the Irish nationalist tradition: about the Penal Laws ("One Catholic scholar I met in Dublin thinks that the eighteenth century in Ireland was an unusually pleasant century"), the rebellion of 1798 (not so much a national uprising, more an occasion for religious feud), the conduct of the British administration during the Great Famine, etc. It is unreasonable to expect him to have welded

[1] *Landlord or Tenant? A View of Irish History*. By MAGNUS MAGNUSSON and HELEN FRY. The Bodley Head, £3.95.

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these piecemeal revisions into any sort of consistent view of the history of the country—one, say, which would give a proper perspective to the positive contributions made by English civilisation and British rule. If he had done he might have alarmed the BBC and prevented his book being published: the Corporation is probably less anxious to take responsibility for passing on Edward Norman's views on Irish history than his critique of contemporary churches.

One or two of Magnusson's revisions are not happy. There are, for example, the Old English, the Anglophone population of the island during the 16th and 17th centuries, inhabiting mostly its eastern edge and a string of port towns from Dundalk round to Galway, who have a reasonable claim to have bequeathed to the present Republic its form of Christianity and its constitutional tradition, not to mention its principal language, but have proved impossible to fit into the national theory on which the state was founded. It is a pity that all Magnusson can find to say about them is that they were "Anglo-Norman lords who had adopted Irish ways and were doubtful in their allegiance to the Crown", which is really quite the reverse of the truth.

He has also got the wrong end of the stick about almost the only revision he cites of the entrenched opinions of Ulster unionists: the one about the Pope blessing King Billy. For one thing the story has always, so far as I know, been regarded by them as rather a feather in their cap, and for another it is not true. At least, if it means no more than that Pope Alexander VIII was not displeased at the outcome of the Battle of the Boyne, it is probably true but has been common knowledge at least since Macaulay; if it means that that Pope's predecessor, Innocent XI, took part in organising William's landing in England to overthrow King James II, the story seems to go back to some correspondence forged by the French to discredit the Pope, with whom they were in dispute. It took in Ranke, but has long since been blown.

Still, by and large Magnusson and Helen Fry, who did his "research" for him, have done a reasonable job according to their lights, and I would not dissuade anyone from buying their book who was ignorant of Irish history and was willing to spend four pounds for 142 pages of reasonably accurate comment and broadcastable quotation. Buyers will also be able to paste on their wall a judicious comment of F. S. L. Lyons:

> "To understand the past fully is to cease to live in it, and to cease to live in it is to take the earliest steps towards shaping what is to come from the material of the present."

I DO NOT THINK this is quite exactly A. T. Q. Stewart's view, and Dr Stewart, though an ornament of history-teaching in the Queen's University of Belfast, does not seem to be one of those whom Magnus Magnusson has consulted. The first thing to be said about *The Narrow Ground*[2] is that, if we are to judge the credibility of a historian's case by his care in the use of the language he presents it in, it presents a very credible case indeed. The second is that it is the work, or at least is offered as the work, of a very traditional historian. The third is that its point of view is a unionist one. The last two points call for some clarification.

Dr Stewart does not conceal the fact that he has been moved by a powerful impulsion to speak up against historical or theoretical views which have been influential among English political persons in whose hands the destinies of Northern Ireland have rested since 1969, and also among the numerous practitioners of the social sciences who have descended upon the province, actually or metaphorically, since that date: armed, as he sees it, with conflict-theory and other hard- or software designed to explain to a confused and misguided population that it knew not what it did. He sees both sets of outsiders as starting from the form of this assumption propagated by the intellectual strategists of the Civil Rights movement in the late 1960s: that it was incorrect to suppose that what was at issue in Northern Ireland was the hostility of national or religious communities, when the question was in fact one of redistributive social justice and did not raise national or religious problems in any form. He has also in mind the more radical form of the assumption which has attracted socialists both revolutionary and democratic, that the religious and national differences did not exist of themselves but had been created in order that social injustice might be maintained and would disappear when it was abolished.

This is all perfectly clear, but one thing needs to be said on the historiographical side. For all Dr Stewart's distaste for those who commit a social science, I am very sorry to say that, for reasons I hope to explain, I think he is actually an anthropologist *malgré lui*; not, as he fondly hopes, in the rearguard of the historical profession but somewhere towards the van; one of those at the front crying "Back!"

Anyway, he wishes to say (on a more general front than he handled in his *The Ulster Crisis* which concerned the events of 1911–14) that those who put about the reductionist view of the conflicts of the province were possibly deceiving themselves and certainly deceiving others; that the exposition presupposed a childish conception of history in general and of northern Irish history in particular; and that the state of agitation which has existed in the province since 1969 has brought no innovation (barring some technological improvements) on the

[2] *The Narrow Ground. Aspects of Ulster, 1609–1969.* By A. T. Q. STEWART. Faber, £5.95.

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past, but remained strictly within the framework provided by it. From that date at least, and partly because the dismantling of the state erected in 1921 has left it in a kind of state of nature, the population has been driven to seek sustenance in its own "folk-memory" and resorted to patterns of behaviour which are warranted by tradition and "cannot be changed or broken by any of the means now being employed to 'solve' the Ulster Question."

The rigour of his charge of ignorance brought against British governments and social scientists may be a bit overdone, but surely nobody who has followed the tone and trend of public comment or academic discussion about Ulster during the past decade can doubt that it contains a great deal of truth. (My favourite surviving example of it is a friend from the news, the "mainly-Catholic-Social-Democratic-and-Labour-Party.") What has gone wrong—I am not suggesting that some things have not gone right—since 1969 has been due as much as anything to a prevalence in the educated mind of kinds of quasi-historical explanation which were trivial because they did not depend on or encourage exact acquaintance with particular circumstances. Dr Stewart wants to restore this acquaintance as the beginning of understanding: his "narrow ground" no doubt refers in the first place to the territory he is talking about, but would also refer to some kind of a view of the writing of history.

THE FIRST OF THE FIVE essays in his book discusses the origins of the province's population, most interestingly those of the Protestant community or communities. It or they were not, he claims, primarily the result of the planned scheme of plantation launched by King James I. This applied to the four western counties of the present province (Derry, Tyrone, Fermanagh and Armagh), had Londonderry as its centre, and was broadly speaking a failure, as were similar efforts in other parts of Ireland like Munster. The settlement which succeeded occurred in Antrim and Down, had Belfast as its centre, was largely Scottish in origin, and happened by continuous natural immigration which began long before the plantation and continued long after it. "Natural", that is, because it was largely unsponsored; and also because the geographical relation between south-western Scotland, the isles, and north-eastern Ireland was so close as to ensure spontaneous movement of population between them. In the early Middle Ages the direction was chiefly from Ireland to Scotland, in the late mediaeval and early modern periods from Scotland to Ireland, since the 18th century the other way again. Scottish migration to Ireland was, naturally enough, Catholic before the Scottish Reformation, whence the existing Catholic population of the north Antrim coast, and Protestant after it. After this he talks about the

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state of siege in which settlers, especially those in the west of Ulster, have found themselves since the plantation: from the Irish uprising of 1641, via the siege of Derry of 1689, to the event which marked the beginning of another and no doubt final siege of the city in August 1969, commonly known as the Battle of the Bogside.

He gives us a short history of the Ulster Presbyterians, riven by a tension between the Old Light and the New, bearers of an instinctive and slightly perverse anti-establishmentism variously expressed in the radical politics of 1798, evangelical revival, and schism.

> "Who or what [said a minister to the Synod of 1817, objecting to interference by the government of the day in the appointment of a professor of theology at Belfast Academical Institution] is this Lord Castlereagh . . . ? Is he a minister of the body? Is he an elder? What right has he to intrude on our deliberations? I revere the government of my country. I pay it a willing obedience in matters civil. I am no cavilling politician. But I protest against government dictating an opinion as to the measures we should adopt for the interests of religion. . . . This day's decision will tell . . . whether we deserve that Lord Castlereagh should drive his chariot into the midst of us, and tread us down as the offal of the streets."

We have, I take Dr Stewart to be implying, heard that voice more recently, and I for one should be sorry if it were to disappear from the counsels of the nation.

The rest of the book is about violence, and seems to me to contain its most original contribution. One might argue with the quotations he brings from early observers to the effect that violence has been, as far back as one can go, an endemic feature of the Irish scene; they were, after all, not necessarily more *au fait* than newspaper correspondents nowadays. But there seems to me a good deal to be said for his view that Irish patterns of violence, given their highly ritualised form, have anthropological origins which ought not to be ignored: that the IRA draws strength from a tradition of the "secret army" and its captains, and derives in a historically traceable way from the rustic youth-gang, agent of the charivari in more benign environments; that the rural violence in 18th-century County Armagh, which gave birth to the Orange Order and other illustrations of Ulster folklife, did not begin from agrarian discontent or over-population, but from quasi-ritual fighting at local fairs, and that the opposing gangs which emerged were originally trans-sectarian and only became polarised in religion at a comparatively late date; that, in short, there is a structural tradition of feud and violence in the country which is independent of the presence of Protestants and

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would survive their departure. "Sure", as the tenant from County Monaghan said in the middle of the 19th century, "wouldn't it be far better any day to be fightin' among friends, than have no fightin' at all?"

Maybe the remark was invented, but the history of Irish republicanism, not to mention that of the Free State, gives a good deal of credit to its substance. Dr Stewart expounds the ritual character of the Irish riot, and shows the patterns of confrontation in the streets of Belfast exposed by television to the world as reproducing, in overall plan and minute detail, except that the policemen were then mostly Catholics, those of a century and more ago. I wonder if there is not a similar tale to tell about the character of the peace motif in the province, in its association with women and the clergy. Though he may be claiming a bit too much for his anthropological and topographical archaeology, and giving the impression that nothing in the country has ever changed or ever will, it does seem to me that Dr Stewart's concentration on the narrow ground has proved its point, and that his admonition to propounders of solutions to the problems of Northern Ireland ought to be heeded, if there are any such propounders left.

HOW FAR, ACADEMICALLY SPEAKING, he is tilting at windmills may be judged from the essays in the collection *Minorities in History*, edited by A. C. Hepburn of the New University of Ulster at Coleraine.[3] Their aim is comparative analysis, and though their understanding of what constitutes a minority is over-generous, so that they are sometimes comparing the incomparable, it seems no bad thing to have tried to see the case of Ulster in the context of the South Tyrol, of Cyprus or Quebec. The trouble comes when these are held to constitute a corpus of minority-theory within which conclusions and explanations can be indifferently assumed to apply in any given case, so that actual evidence does not have to be looked for; and Hepburn's own piece on Ulster Catholics in the century before partition seems a case of this. His subject is immigration into towns, his method quantitative social description, his principal source the census. He shows that, in such matters as size of household, literacy, presence of servants and rateable valuation, the Catholics of the adjacent towns of Portadown and Lurgan differed greatly from each other, and in Portadown closely resembled in these respects members of the Church of Ireland. Judged by these criteria the division in Portadown was between the Presbyterians and the rest.

[3] *Minorities in History. Historical Studies XII: Papers read before the Thirteenth Irish Conference of Historians at the New University of Ulster, 1977.* Edited by A. C. HEPBURN. Edward Arnold, £13.50.

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This is interesting information, and the Catholics of Portadown will be pleased to know that history has taken notice of them at last. I doubt if they will see much sense in Hepburn's observation that (if only they had known about them) the facts revealed "could have formed the basis for a Catholic-Episcopalian group consciousness *vis-à-vis* a Presbyterian élite", or sympathise with his complaint against the corporation of Belfast for having, in defiance of them, persisted in presenting its civil statistics in columns headed "Protestant" and "Roman Catholic." They may or may not agree when he explains the difference between themselves and the Catholics of Lurgan as the result of a determination on the part of "popular Protestantism . . . to maintain control of the 'homeland' by diverting Catholic urban immigration, as far as possible, out of the province altogether" which for reasons unknown had proved more successful in one case than in the other. They might indeed feel inclined to claim some credit for it themselves, having always, from what I am told, regarded the Catholics of Lurgan as a thoroughly inferior lot. As Dr Stewart insists, everybody in Ulster is human, and I do not think the Ulster problem is really any deeper than that.

When the Ghost Begins to Quicken

Recent Fiction—By TOM PAULIN

FREDERICK BUSCH HAS WRITTEN a remarkable and marvellous novel. *The Mutual Friend*[1] begins with George Dolby—Dickens's valet and manager in his later years—coughing blood in a charity ward during the last months of the 19th century. Dolby scribbles his memoirs of "the Chief" who is shown savaging his body and imagination as he careers from one public reading to another:

> The feeling was dead, the vision crippled, his left leg dragged enough to make the carpets whisper. When he didn't know we looked, and maybe when he did, it seemed as though he heard his blood beat. But when he was on the stage he was a decorated panther, and he stalked, all giant eyes all-seeing, and hunger ready to spring.

Dickens is a genius and a monster who invents the age he lives in and who is obsessed with fire, flood, disaster and murder. "You suffer most horribly after a Murder", Dolby warns him when he insists on reading Sykes and Nancy yet again. His "terrible passion for death" holds Dolby "in its fist", and Dolby serves him eagerly and critically. And always we feel that the *ficelles*, the shadowy mutual friends and servants with whom Dickens surrounds himself, are baulking against the "sullen servitude" he imposes on them.

Dolby's strategy is to invent various narrative voices: Ellen Ternan, Kate Hogarth, a reformed prostitute, Dickens himself, a ward orderly called Moon—each delivers monologues in the novel. They all feel "a sense of entrapment" and with this goes a sense of freedom that is altogether different from Dickens's demonic imagination. His imagination inhabits "some place smelling of graves and magic and despair"—it is brutally punitive and murderous—and it returns again and again to "the sickening crunch of blunt wood" on a woman's skull. And as Dickens moves restlessly from place to place, pirating the living world, these other voices challenge his possessive megalomania.

Most remarkably, a reformed prostitute called Barbara looks back to her childhood in the New Forest and her rape at the age of thirteen in a London brothel:

> No one at Curzon Street went home. I learned then that a woman's body, once it is opened to the world, is somehow allied to the door which closes on a hearth's bright fire. This lesson has held up well. Ask the Master's wife.

Her experience finds mutual parallels in that of Kate Hogarth and Ellen Ternan, and later she becomes a servant at Gadshill where she seduces Dicken's son, Plorn, as the house echoes to Dickens's shrieks as he rehearses "the Murder." When Barbara is insolent to Dickens he angrily shouts, "*Learn* sorrow, then! Learn station! Learn *place*!" Knowing his ignorance and savage hatred of women, she witnesses his domestic tyranny, his "humanness", and his "immeasurable acquisitiveness." In doing so, she mounts a powerful challenge to his imaginative dictatorship and so frees herself from being yet another of his servile ministrants.

For Frederick Busch, freedom exists through the uniqueness of each voice, and he brilliantly catches a strange, wise, sometimes sinister accent in the cadences of Barbara's speech. His ear for individual human speech is most delicate and

[1] *The Mutual Friend*. By FREDERICK BUSCH. Harvester Press, £4.95.

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subtle, and when Kate Hogarth tells of her sorrows we hear the voice of another servant—the delicate housewife who "knew when to be still" and whose timid integrity was cruelly abused by her husband. Often Dickens appears intent on reducing every woman to the status of "whore", and this is felt most strongly in the tortured hypocrisy of Ellen Ternan's monologue. Her account is initially a piece of pious self-justification:

> That I am a Christian, and the dutiful wife of a Christian shepherd, *should* be mentioned. I am a daughter and a wife. I had a Friend.

Then the accent changes as she remembers Dickens's seduction of her (an account that echoes Barbara's rape in the brothel in Curzon Street). Dickens removes his "player's moustache" and goes to bed with his statuesque Estella. Like Kate Hogarth, Ellen asks: "Is it not curious how what is written may later come to pass?" So she becomes the cold effigy which Dickens shapes as she lies passively in the dark toils of the savage god whom she calls her "friend." She remembers "the dry long pain" and that Dickens would not permit "my handling him."

Dolby's journey from bustling prosperity to social dereliction among "the sewage of a civilization" is an enactment of Dickens's fears for himself. Towards the end Dickens muses on his sense of being "cloistered in my life, and still not wholly free." He knows that had he not possessed such an intensely powerful will, he would be lying, like Dolby, "in some gaspers' charity ward, pouring out my blood upon the coarse and yellowed sheets." Here, the affinity in suffering between Dickens and Dolby assumes a quality which I can only call tragic immortality. Dickens complains and Dolby doesn't, and although there is an occult affinity between them—the mutuality of friendly doubles—it's the absence of a sense of grievance which finally frees and ennobles Dolby. True tragedy shows grief, but never grievance, and the sense of immortality which it offers is present in Dolby's account of his life in damp crumbling lodgings and foul workhouses. If there is an answer to the great closing lines of Yeats's "The Cold Heaven", then I think that Frederick Busch has magnificently discovered it:

> *Ah, when the ghost begins to quicken,*
> *Confusion of the death-bed over, is it sent*
> *Out naked on the roads, as the books say, and stricken*
> *By the injustice of the skies for punishment?*

THE RUSSIAN symbolist poet, Andrei Bely, was a friend of Mandelstam's, and their attitudes to the city of St Petersburg—the "transparent Petropolis" of Mandelstam's poetry—were

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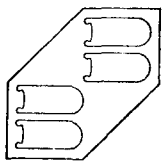

interestingly similar. In *Hope Abandoned* Nadezhda Mandelstam says that for her husband St Petersburg was "a city of the dead" and that it resembled "a necropolis with an immigrant, constantly shifting, always lifeless population, its citizens walking the streets like automatons, their already dead eyes glazed by the worst terror in the country." Although Bely's novel, *Petersburg*,[2] is set in 1905 its weird and foggy atmosphere is prophetic of the Stalinist terror which Mandelstam witnessed in the streets of Russia's rational and occidental city. Dostoevsky called St Petersburg "the most fantastic and intentional city in the world", and for Bely the city exists in the mind of the ageing bureaucrat, Apollon Apollonovitch, as a fantastic confusion of "pyramids, triangles, parallelepipeds, cubes and trapezoids." Apollonovitch loves "the plane geometry of the state" and he exists in the novel more as a shadowy geometrical function than as a human being. The streets, planned in parallel lines by Peter the Great, "transform passersby into shadows", and as revolutionary crowds form and fade every citizen lives in "the delirium of geometry." The Bronze Horseman—a statue of Peter the Great—comes to life and charges through the city like a future autocrat, grey crowds steam through the fog, the upper classes decorate their drawing-rooms with Japanese landscapes and discuss the latest work of "Henri Besançon"—an absurd conflation of Annie Besant and Henri Bergson.

Bely's narrative technique is adventurous and experimental. It's a rapid and rhetorical cinematic collage which breaks with the traditional novel form in a manner that is reminiscent of *Ulysses*—that narrative bomb which virtually destroyed the novel. However, Vladimir Nabokov's claim that *Petersburg* ranks with the work of Joyce, Kafka and Proust is impossible to sustain. Bely reduces the events of 1905 to a simplistic colour-symbolism which transforms history into a hectic series of vanishing surfaces. St Petersburg at sunset is described with flimsy obviousness:

> An enormous crimson sun raced above the Neva, and the buildings of Petersburg seemed to be melting away, turning into the lightest of smoky amethyst lace. The windowpanes sent off cutting flame-gold reflections, and from the tall spires flashed rubies. And indentations and projections stretched away into the burning conflagration: caryatids, cornices of brick balconies.

Then Bely describes the different colours which the palace had been painted throughout its history, and finally drives his message home by adding, "And there the past was having its sunset." People blur and dissolve, time "sharpens its teeth", and the

[2] *Petersburg*. By ANDREI BELY. Translated, annotated, and introduced by ROBERT A. MAGUIRE and JOHN E. MALMSTAD. Harvester Press, £7.50.

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delirious narrator apostrophises Russia, the reader and the omnipresent bureaucrat who symbolises the rational spirit of the city. Essentially, the novel is a buttonholing panorama which swoops and dives without ever making contact with the historical process:

> Now the ploughmen had ceased to scratch at their lands, and abandoning their harrows and wooden ploughs, they assembled in small clusters by their huts. They talked and argued, and then suddenly, all of one mind, moved on the master's colonnaded house. Through all the long nights the sky shone bloody with the glow of conflagrations in the countryside.
>
> Yes! Thus it was in the villages.

Much as Bely's imaginative effort is to be admired—his translators supply an excellent introduction and notes—the result has a manic helplessness which lacks the ability to transform the pressure of actuality into the poised certainties of voice and vision. The aesthetic surfaces he designs simplify politics and although his swirling time-scheme is true to the revolutionary energy in the streets the characters tend to melt into the flux of becoming. There is a moment of being when Apollonovich frees himself from "his official duties" and remembers "the orphaned distances of the provinces, the wisps of smoke from tiny villages, and the jackdaw. He suddenly wanted to see the wisps of smoke from the tiny villages, and the jackdaw." An orthodox Marxist would argue that to seek such moments of pure being within political reality is to perforate history with an escapist concept of bourgeois leisure; however a glance at the extraordinary closing paragraphs of Chapter 13 of Trotsky's autobiography will show that even the most dedicated revolutionary could turn from politics to a numinous stillness. The fizzy crowded texture of *Petersburg* is caught by Mandelstam in one of his elegies to Bely when he says, "He brought across—as only one with the power could have done—A crowd of minds, events, impressions." Although we can sense certain reservations here, Mandelstam is praising his dead friend, and to receive such praise is the most special grace.

IN A NOTE on his new novel, *Shosha*,[3] Isaac Bashevis Singer says that the story "does not represent the Jews of Poland in the pre-Hitler years by any means." Although the narrator—a young writer called Aaron Greidinger—often refers to historical events, the effect is that of a fiction which is curiously insulated from history. Aaron has

[3] *Shosha*. By ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER. Jonathan Cape, £4.95.

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various affairs which symbolise different possible commitments—to Poland, Russian communism, American capitalism. He then marries his childhood sweetheart, Shosha, who lives on Krochmalna Street, as Singer himself once did. This street in the Jewish quarter of Warsaw is the mnemonic centre of Singer's imagination and Aaron calls it "a deep stratum of an archaeological dig which I could never uncover." When Aaron returns there Singer speaks through him in a manner that is terse and authentic:

> We reached Krochmalna Street and the stench I recalled from my childhood struck me first—a blend of burned oil, rotten fruit and chimney smoke. Everything was the same—the cobblestone pavement, the steep gutter, the balconies hung with wash. We passed a factory with wire-latticed windows and a blind wall with a wooden gate I never saw in all my youth. Every house here was bound up with memories.

Shosha is the frail muse of Krochmalna Street, a thin childlike figure who has neither grown nor aged. Betty Slonim—the worldly American actress who is one of Aaron's mistresses—tells him that Shosha is "an idiot", but she embodies a rooted nostalgia and he plans to leave with her for America.

The story is really a fable in which Singer examines his own emigration and the rich but fragile memories which he brought with him from Europe. In the final postwar section we learn that Shosha died shortly after leaving Warsaw, and here Singer suggests that the imaginative seam which he has been working in his previous fictions is virtually exhausted. There is a poem by Hardy called "Memory and I" in which various remembered images are invoked in a way that makes them seem increasingly faded and insubstantial. Shosha is such a brittle spectre and, although her tenuous existence is persuasively caught in the story, the other events suggest the perfunctory exercise of narrative skill rather than an informing inspiration. Evil is stated, rather than enacted, and the characters appear to be shielded from it by an invisible screen. Singer has over-extended his subject and although the pale figure of Shosha achieves a wispy dominance the result is disappointing.

A. S. BYATT'S *The Virgin in the Garden*[4] is a serious and ambitious attempt to catch the essence of English culture in the 1950s. Its prologue is set fifteen years on from the Coronation and the Festival of Britain, and the style is a conscious parody of James: "It was not, this decided

[4] *The Virgin in the Garden*. By A. S. BYATT. Chatto and Windus, £5.95.

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person declared, his scene." The decided person—a verse dramatist called Alexander Wedderburn—muses on "the nature of modern parody" and in the manner of John Fowles's Daniel Martin he surveys those First World War recruiting posters which were a part of the '60s scene. Although we're soon delivered from this purgatory of received images and styles, there's an unambiguously admiring moment when Frederica, the young consciousness of the story, glances at the audience that has gathered in the National Portrait Gallery "to hear Flora Robson do Queen Elizabeth." Various establishment figures are described—the "benignly severe face" of Helen Gardner, Lady Antonia Fraser and A. S. Byatt herself. It's a moment of cultural introversion, a kind of narcissistic preening, which innocently suggests that we are being offered a privileged glimpse of an important episode in the life of the spirit.

The long story that follows is peculiarly eccentric in that the personalities of the characters are made to exist in the light of their educational achievements. Young Daniel Orton passes his Eleven-plus though "not spectacularly"—in my day you simply passed or failed and all that dreary competitiveness about grades began several years later. Other characters—including Edmund Wilkie who is a double allegory of Sir Walter Raleigh and Jonathan Miller—are so completely enmeshed in the educational system that their O and A levels assume the status of moral qualities. It's as if Byatt believes that some people are born with a Cambridge Tripos in their mouth. The rigorous pedagogic puritanism which lies behind this attitude makes it impossible for people to exist for what they are—Daniel Orton's worthy humanity and working-class background are simply embarrassing and the real sympathy lies with the achiever, Frederica, who finds in the idea of "lamination" both "a model of conduct and an aesthetic." This is the quintessence of puritanism, but nowhere does this extremely self-conscious narrative ever permit a detailed examination of it. The personalities of the characters are presented in the mode of a sixth-form essay: "Marcus had not, as James said of Eliot, a mind so fine that no idea could violate it." Even the national psyche has, "like Hamlet's despair, no objective correlative." It's as though Byatt expects the reader to award marks for wide critical reading.

Elsewhere there is a great deal of costume-drama Tudor kitsch, and for every emotion there is always a quotation—when someone falls in love they inevitably remember that famous line from *Phèdre*. This means that the story displays such a level of literary self-consciousneses that it never acquires any autonomy. Occasionally there's a moment of releasing recognition—as when tomato plants are described as smelling "like powdered hot metal"—but for the most part the narrative wanders disconsolately along the fringes of an A-level syllabus.

WILFRED SHEED almost manages to make the supremely inauthentic personality of Monty Chatworth into a dominating comic character.[5] Chatworth is a vulgar, rootless, cosmopolitan chat-show host—a cross between David Frost and Michael Parkinson—and as he rises without trace somewhere between London and New York he tells his life-story to "Father Sony", his Japanese taperecorder. He is a hollow public personality who sometimes manages a casually witty remark: "Anyhow, a crammer's turned out to to be an outpost of Dickens territory long since stripmined by English humorists." Again, the conversation of an Oxford student is "totally dependent on italics. Thus 'Who *is* that ex*tra*ordinary little man with that gar*gan*tuan woman?'" Chatworth begins to think that upper-class Englishmen have "no motives at all. It would be a terrible breach of form to actually *want* to do something."

Despite these clever and accurate observations, Chatworth exists only as "a machine for devouring people." He is a showbiz spieler who lacks and yet craves a private personality—one of the contemporary equivalents of Rameau's nephew. This means that everything he says is a kind of streaming pap which goes on and on like muzak. Monologue is a difficult form, and it may be that Sheed intends to parody the kind of solipsistic tedium which Saul Bellow purveys. But parody must have an intelligent—and authentic—context. It's rather like Ivan Ilyich without the death—nothing redeems its cynical, official rhetoric. For all his gifts Wilfrid Sheed appears not to realise that reading is a private activity, though part of the jest may be that *Transatlantic Blues* is meant to be the fictional equivalent of audible wallpaper. In that case it should have been marketed as a cassette.

[5] *Transatlantic Blues*. By WILFRED SHEED. Sidgwick & Jackson, £5.50.

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Between Vienna & Jerusalem

The Strange Case of Bruno Kreisky

By Robert Wistrich

THE PUBLIC exhibition of Jewish squabbles is never an edifying experience, yet in recent years the Austrian Chancellor, Dr Bruno Kreisky, seems to find himself regularly at the centre of such spectacles. Three years ago it was the "Wiesenthal Affair" which pitted the Chancellor against the famed Nazi-hunter and head of Vienna's Jewish Documentation Centre. Now, once again, following an interview given in the Dutch Protestant newspaper *Trouw*, Kreisky has become the focal point of a political storm involving his views on the Middle East conflict. In both cases it was his intemperate generalisations about Israel, Zionism, and the Jewish "character" that provoked violent protests. Fate appears to have cast Dr Kreisky in the role of accuser and victim at the same time, plagued by "misunderstandings" and his inability to resolve the problem of his own origins in a dignified manner.

The latest instalment in this Central European tragi-comedy of errors occurred on the eve of the Camp David talks between Carter, Begin, and Sadat. Only two months earlier, Kreisky, together with his old comrade-in-arms Willy Brandt, had produced a suggested declaration of principles, the so-called "Vienna document" on the Middle East, which appeared to offer a promising exit from the impasse in the Israeli-Egyptian talks. Both President Anwar el-Sadat and the leader of the Israeli Labour Party, Shimon Peres (who had met in Vienna at Kreisky's instigation) approved the document as a basis for further negotiations. In the Knesset, former Foreign Minister Yigal Allon even characterised it as "the best interpretation of [Resolution] 242 ever. . .", a statement which is less surprising when one recalls that it was initially drafted by his Labour colleague, Abba Eban. The plan had one major defect—it was conceived, so to speak, behind the back of Menachem Begin, the Israeli Premier—but from Kreisky's standpoint it served to reinforce his own prestige as an international statesman and to strengthen the hand of the Israeli Labour Party.

But an interview which Kreisky gave to the US journalist James Dorsey at his holiday home in Majorca was to undo all his earlier efforts at mediation. In the text of this interview (*Jerusalem Post*, 3 September 1978), the Austrian Chancellor referred to Mr Begin as a "political grocer", a "little Polish lawyer from Warsaw, or whatever he was . . . ." He went on: "They are so alienated, they think in such a warped way, these Eastern Jews, because they have never had political responsibility." As for the Israelis,

> "they are good soldiers, but you can learn that quickly. That is only a refined form of banditry. They do not grasp the subtlety in politics. They make themselves unpopular. The most-hated diplomats are the Israelis. It is incredible. They need another hundred years. They are as bad as the Africans who are also intolerable people."

Kreisky went on to describe Israel as a "police state" where "the Arabs are second-class citizens", where "everybody is a general. . . . It's unbelievable vanity. Everybody there plays the big commander. . . . How long will it take before we fight against *apartheid* in Israel." Predictably, he reserved his sharpest barbs for partisans of a Greater Israel who

> "forget that no single State with protectorates has ever stayed intact. Only people with a fascist mentality are unable to see this. . . . All those people who want to keep the West Bank—or as these chauvinists call it, Judea—and what do they call the other?—Samaria, must have been struck blind by God. . . . Sooner or later this will end in a terrible clash, in isolation which even the richest American and European Jews will not be able to break through."

As it happens, Dr Kreisky's dire forebodings were not borne out by the results of the Camp David meeting where the "political grocer", Mr Begin, made substantial concessions which even the Austrian Chancellor had subsequently acknowledged. But the timing and tone of Kreisky's interview provoked widespread anger, indignation, shock and even disbelief which were

ROBERT WISTRICH *is Editor of "The Wiener Library Bulletin" and a Research Fellow at University College, London. He is the author of "Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky" (Harrap, 1976) and editor of "The Left against Zion: Communism, Israel, and the Middle East" (Vallentine Mitchell, 1979). His article "A Neo-Revisionist Renaissance: Back to Eduard Bernstein?" appeared in* ENCOUNTER *(June 1978).*

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not assuaged by his very qualified and grudging apology. In Austria itself, though the socialist press tried to maintain a discreet silence, the Conservative opposition was quick to dissociate itself from such insulting remarks about a friendly nation. The deputy speaker of the Austrian Parliament, the veteran socialist Otto Probst, resigned as President of the Austrian-Israel Society in protest at Kreisky's defamatory statements. So did the honorary Austrian consul in Israel, Leopold Gottesman. The largest-circulation daily in Austria, the *Kronenzeitung*, commented in an editorial (4 September) that Kreisky should not be surprised "if he is surpassed in unpopularity in Israel only by Yasser Arafat." Even the Viennese Jewish community abandoned its customary low profile to send a protest telegram to the Chancellor, stating that "not since the fall of the Third Reich has Jewry been attacked by the head of a democratic State in such terms."

RELATIONS BETWEEN VIENNA AND JERUSALEM had reached their nadir. The response in Israel ranged from Mr Begin's cold contempt ("Kreisky is clearly a man who hates his father and mother") to former Premier Itzhak Rabin's statement that he could recall no precedent for such a "wild, hate-filled attack on the State of Israel, the Jewish people and Israeli personalities." Israeli public opinion invariably interpreted Kreisky's remarks in the light of the Holocaust and the murderous anti-Semitism in which many Austrians had been willing accomplices only 35 years ago. The *Jerusalem Post* spoke for many in its solemn editorial of 4 September:

> "A depravity of mind is clearly indicated. That a socialist leader whose movement is largely the creation of East European Jews should hurl foul racist abuse at the *Ostjuden*; that an Austrian Chancellor, of all people, should employ unbridled nationalist invective at Israel's Prime Minister is something that cannot be accounted for in rational terms."

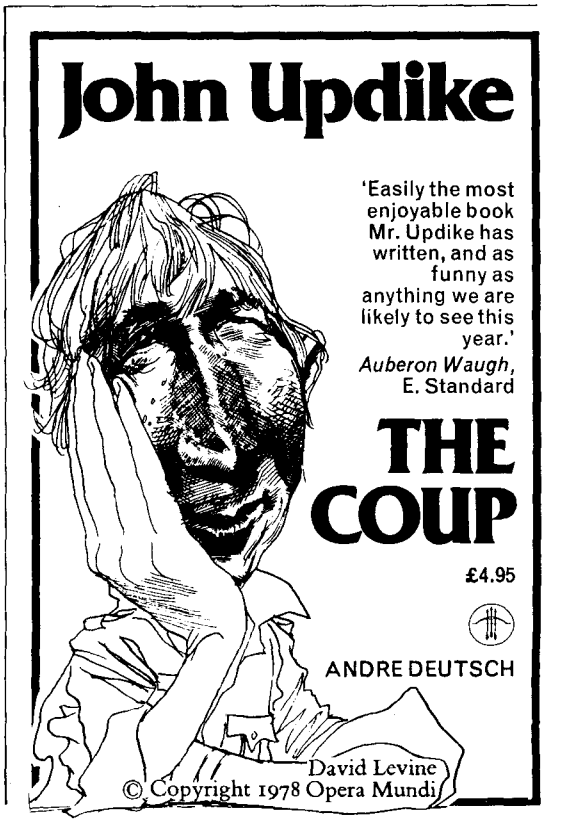
There were hints that Kreisky had absorbed "some of the most vicious prejudices of the Viennese back-alleys", and a reminder that he owed his position, at least in part, to "an act of gentile atonement for the crimes committed against the Jewish people."

The Israeli satirist Ephraim Kishon was even more blunt in a vitriolic piece (11 September) for the West German magazine, *Der Spiegel*.

> "We used to tell our fellow Israelis you've got to look at it Kreisky's way: after all, he's the Austrian Chancellor, not the Chief Rabbi of Vienna."

He was admittedly "born into the Mosaic faith but of pure socialist descent (*rein sozialistischen Ursprungs*)"; yet this did not entitle him to say things that "at least in the West are still heard only on cracked 40-year-old records." Of course, not every critic of Zionism was automatically an anti-Semite, but "it may just possibly happen. . . ." For Kishon, there was no doubt that the Austrian Chancellor was indeed a vintage Jewish self-hater who had decided "he's got a hump and therefore proceeds to hate all hunchbacks." For most other Israelis, Kreisky's views on their country were also seen as the neurotic fantasies of a "renegade Jew" striving to become the golden *goy*.[1] The Chancellor had joined Yasser Arafat, George Habash, Colonel Qadaffi and Idi Amin Dada in the current Israeli rogues gallery.

MOST EMBARRASSED OF ALL was the unlucky Shimon Peres who had the rug taken out from under his feet. Not only did the Israeli labour leader have to confront a buoyant Menachem Begin enjoying popular hero-status after his Camp David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[1] One of the few exceptions was the Israeli politician, Uri Avnery, a friend of Kreisky, who accused his countrymen of hysterical over-reaction. See *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (8 September 1978).

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performance, but he was inevitably tainted in the public mind by the faith he had previously placed in Bruno Kreisky. In contrast to his predecessors, Golda Meir and Itzhak Rabin, he had been on friendly terms with a man who was now little better than a leper in the eyes of Jerusalem. To his credit, Peres maintained a dignified stance, rebutting Kreisky's remarks in a sober, factual manner in an open letter (published on 20 September in *Die Gemeinde*, the organ of the Vienna Jewish community). Peres pointed out that if the Jewish people did not exist (as Kreisky had always argued), then how could one generalise about *Ostjuden*? Was bourgeois origin and place of birth the qualification for modern political leadership? Did such East European Jews as Chaim Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, and Golda Meir lack a sense of political responsibility? As for the Israeli Army, for centuries Jews had been vilified because they were not soldiers and farmers, because they did not know how to fight, to stand their ground. Now that they had learnt at bitter cost to defend their lives and their land, they were told by Kreisky that the imperatives of survival and self-defence were proof of militarism and a "fascist mentality."

IT IS DOUBTFUL whether such arguments carry any weight with Dr Kreisky, irrespective of the motivations for his most recent outburst. His views on the Arab-Israeli conflict have followed a consistent pattern ever since he became Chancellor eight years ago, and sought to secure Austrian oil supplies by a policy of close friendship with the Arab States. He was, moreover, a pace-setter among European statesmen in his enthusiastic advocacy of the Palestinian cause and of the "moderate" credentials of the PLO. What marks him off from contemporary Western leaders and fellow Social-Democrats (like Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmidt, or James Callaghan) has been the virulence of his anti-Zionist feelings and his willingness to excuse even the most dastardly acts of Arab terrorism.

The comparison with Brandt is particularly instructive, since their political careers and beliefs show many parallels. Both men were profoundly shaped by their Scandinavian experiences during World War II (Brandt was an exile in Norway and Kreisky in Sweden), and they transplanted the "Nordic" tradition of democratic socialism to Central Europe after the War, i.e. the marriage of the labour movement to modern technology and an efficient management of a mixed capitalist system. Under their leadership, the Social Democrats of West Germany and Austria succeeded in broadening their mass base and transforming themselves from proletarian-class parties into modern, progressive "people's parties" (*Volksparteien*) that attracted the new managerial/technical intelligentsia, small business, and even the traditionally hostile rural electorate. In international affairs, both Brandt and Kreisky successfully projected an image of experience, solidity and pragmatic realism. Brandt's *Ostpolitik* was probably the forerunner of Kreisky's mediation efforts in the Middle East, though the latter experience has been notably less fruitful.

The difference between the two men on the Israeli and Jewish problem does not lie so much in their political standpoint but in their moral sensitivity. Brandt as a convinced Gentile anti-fascist has no "guilt-complex", yet maintains a respectful attitude to Jewish sufferings during the War. His gesture in kneeling silently before the Warsaw Ghetto memorial to the Jewish martyrs of the Holocaust showed a *Feingefühl* that has no equivalent in Kreisky's behaviour. On the contrary, the latter, when it was politically expedient to recall the Holocaust, merely used it as another stick with which to beat the Israelis.

NOTHING ILLUSTRATED THIS more clearly than the Wiesenthal Affair, which revealed what can only be described as the neurotic features in Kreisky's "Jewish complex." His clash with Simon Wiesenthal was on the face of it purely an internal Austrian affair and one which concerned attitudes to the Nazi past rather than the contemporary problems of the Middle East. But Kreisky's handling of the affair managed to transform it into an international scandal and demonstrates more clearly than anything else his underlying attitudes to the Jewish question. It is here that one must seek the roots of his more recent outburst if one is trying to explain his emotional animus against *Ostjuden*, the philosophy of Zionism, and the Jewish State.

Simon Wiesenthal first emerged into the public limelight as a result of the Eichmann trial in 1960 and the role which he played in tracking down the executor of Hitler's "Final Solution" in Europe. The ensuing publicity gave him the impetus to establish a new Documentation Centre in Vienna in November 1961. (He had previously founded a smaller centre in Linz to investigate War Crimes but this had to close down in 1954 because of general public apathy and lack of support from the authorities.)

From his private top-floor flat in a shabby apartment-building in one of Vienna's garment districts, Wiesenthal carried on a meticulous, patient search for wanted Nazi criminals, aided only by a few volunteers, and by tip-offs from sympathisers and informants in different parts of the world. He succeeded in bringing to justice such notorious mass-murderers as the Austrian Franz Stangl (Commandant of Treblinka), Erich Rajakovitch

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(Eichmann's aide), and the Vilna hangman, Franz Murer. Gradually the mass media built up a legend around this lonely figure, who was depicted as a kind of cross between an Old Testament prophet and a self-appointed avenger.

The truth was, however, simpler than the legend. Wiesenthal was a survivor of the Holocaust, a Galician Jew who had been shunted around by the Germans from one concentration camp to the next until he was eventually liberated by the Americans from Mauthausen in 1945. Like Kreisky he had lost all his relatives in the Holocaust; but his reaction to this tragedy was very different. As he told the *Sunday Times* (20 October 1974):

> "I do what I do as a symbol for the future. When history looks back on this period I want people to know that the Nazis were not able to kill millions of people and get away with it. My Documentation Centre is the last organisation in the world still hunting Nazis. If I stopped now, the Nazis would say: 'The Jews are giving up. . . .'"

Wiesenthal's activities aroused little enthusiasm among most Austrians. Traditionally one of the most anti-Semitic countries in Europe, Austria had cradled Karl Lueger's "Christian-social" movement and Georg von Schoenerer's "Pan-Germanism", two ideologies whose endemic Judeophobia had inspired Adolf Hitler during his early years in Vienna before 1914. During the First Republic the "Jewish question" had been politically exploited with a cynicism that made Hitler's rapturous welcome in Vienna in 1938 only too understandable. But by 1945 Austria was almost *judenrein*, for emigration and Nazi mass-murder had liquidated most of Vienna's 200,000 Jews, including the predominantly Jewish leadership of the pre-War Austrian socialist party. When Kreisky returned to Austria from Sweden in 1950, it was no longer the Jews but the ex-Nazis (numbering more than 500,000 in a population of approximately 7 millions) who posed a delicate political problem.

Both the Conservatives and the Socialists now found themselves competing with the small Freedom Party (FPOE) for the electoral support of these ex-Nazis who virtually held the narrow balance between the leading political parties. Largely for this reason, there was a tendency, even within the SPOE (Austrian Socialist Party) to play down the magnitude of the crimes committed against the Jews on Austrian soil. Rather than seeking to "master the past" (*Bewältigung der Vergangenheit*, as the Germans call it), expediency was rationalised by references to the need to heal old wounds and make a fresh start. No political party in Austria was ready to risk unpopularity by alienating former supporters of Hitler or more specifically by upholding Jewish claims to compensation. In this climate of opinion, Simon Wiesenthal's fight to bring the mass murderers to justice could count on little governmental or public support.

YET WIESENTHAL DID NOT come into open conflict with the Austrian government until the elections of 1970 brought the socialists to power with a narrow parliamentary majority. As a result of his revelations it was discovered that a number of socialist ministers in Kreisky's cabinet had a Nazi background. Dr Hans Öllinger, the Minister of Agriculture, had apparently been a former *SS* lieutenant; his successor Dr Oskar Weihs had also been a member of the Nazi party at one time; while Kreisky's Interior Minister, Otto Rosch, had been arrested in 1947 on suspicion of neo-Nazi activities and released after eight months for lack of evidence. Kreisky strongly defended his appointments, arguing that many young people who joined the Nazi movement before 1938 had dreamed of a national revival and suffered imprisonment along with Socialists and Communists under the clerical dictatorship of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg. At worst these politicians had been guilty of a "youthful error", which had no bearing on the present. Kreisky's response was widely interpreted as proof that he intended to be "Chancellor of all the Austrians." The neo-Nazi press, for its part, revers-

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ing Lueger's celebrated dictum ("I decide who is a Jew!"), concluded that Kreisky's principle obviously was *Wer ein Nazi ist, bestimmt die SPOE!*

Wiesenthal's disclosures had led him on to a direct collision course with Kreisky and the ruling socialist party. At its conference in June 1970 the SPOE issued a clear warning through its general secretary, Leopold Gratz (today Mayor of Vienna, then Minister of Education). "*Es wird sich bald zeigen, ob dieser Staat die private Fehme-Organisation des Ing. Wiesenthal noch braucht.* (We shall soon see whether our society still needs Wiesenthal's personal 'Star Chamber' courts)." Gratz, widely regarded as Kreisky's protégé, had served warning that the Socialist government was looking for a pretext to close down Wiesenthal's "private police and informers' organisation." Kreisky and his colleagues in the government clearly regarded Wiesenthal's investigations as a festering sore from a bygone age.

They found unexpected allies in the Communist bloc, especially in Poland where a campaign was started, alleging that Wiesenthal had himself been a Nazi "collaborator." The Poles, incensed by his exposure of the role played by ex-fascists in the entourage of General Moczar and anti-Semites high up in the Communist Party apparatus, were out for Wiesenthal's blood. In the aftermath of the so-called "anti-Zionist" crusade in Poland they had little compunction about fabricating evidence against Wiesenthal. In this they were joined by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the Soviet communist youth newspaper, which alleged that the Vienna documentation centre was backed by the Israeli secret service, the CIA, and British Intelligence. Both the Russians and Poles accused Wiesenthal of manufacturing false propaganda concerning anti-Semitism in Communist countries.

IN AUSTRIA ITSELF, the anti-Wiesenthal campaign was openly encouraged by Chancellor Kreisky. In an interview with the Dutch socialist newspaper, *Vrij Nederland*, he described the Nazi hunter as a "Jewish fascist"—"happily, one finds reactionaries also amongst Jews, as well as thieves, murderers and prostitutes", the Austrian Chancellor was quoted as saying. Wiesenthal responded by calling Kreisky a "renegade" and pointing out that Austria was the only country in Europe, twenty-five years after the War, which still had former Nazis in its government and which protected war-criminals from prosecution. In the changing climate of public opinion it appeared as if former Nazi party members were guiltless but those who investigated their past could be slandered with impunity.

It was, however, apparent that Wiesenthal was waging a hopelessly unequal struggle in a country where war criminals were either acquitted or handed derisory sentences, where ex-Nazis still had electoral leverage but the Jewish community had no influence at all. Confronted with the massive indifference, if not open hostility of the population at large, Wiesenthal's persistence appeared increasingly quixotic.

MATTERS FINALLY CAME TO A HEAD following the spectacular socialist victory at the polls in October 1975. The election results were a personal triumph for *Kaiser* Bruno who, after 25 years of active participation in Austrian public life, appeared to stand at the pinnacle of his career. He was the man who had led the SPOE out of its ideological "ghetto" in the 1960s to the greatest electoral victory in its history. Before the elections most pundits had assumed that Kreisky would only be able to form a new government through a coalition with the small Freedom Party led by Friedrich Peter. For the latter, this would have meant the end of 26 years in the political wilderness. Under Peter's leadership, the FPOE (which had once been a haven for ex-Nazis) had swung away from right-wing extremism towards a more liberal posture. Kreisky had let it be known that he would have no objections to an alliance with Herr Peter, should the socialists fail to win an absolute majority.

However, just before election day, Wiesenthal revealed that Peter had been involved in war-crimes against the Jews in Nazi-occupied Russian territory during World War II. He claimed that the 1st *SS* Infantry Brigade, in which Herr Peter had been a tank commander, was responsible for the murder of 10,513 innocent men, women and children, most of them Jews. Peter admitted he had indeed been a member of this *Waffen-SS* unit but denied personal involvement in any shootings or "illegal acts." Once the election results became known and it was clear that Kreisky had no further need of his coalition with Herr Peter's party, the matter might have been allowed to rest. But the Federal Chancellor chose to interpret Wiesenthal's disclosures as an organised campaign "to bring me down." He asserted that Wiesenthal had promised a "small circle of people" to do this, because they thought that he (Kreisky) had not fulfilled his task "in the service of Israel." Speaking to newspapermen, he branded this "ideology" about his indifference to Israel as a form of "mysterious racism" and a "posthumous assumption of Nazi ideas in reverse." In a slashing attack on Wiesenthal which led the latter to institute libel proceedings, Kreisky accused him of using "political Mafia" methods. In the event of a trial, the Federal Chancellor declared himself ready to request the lifting of his parliamentary immunity, so that he could substantiate his charges in court.

Not only the Austrian press was astonished at the vehemence of this reaction. For the next two months the world was to learn that Kreisky was unexpectedly self-conscious about his Jewish

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origins and anxious to affirm his "Austrianism." He had always made it clear that he regarded harping on his background by outsiders, especially Israelis, as an impertinent, if not malicious attempt to undermine his political position. At the same time he now felt free to give vent to his antipathy towards Zionism in a manner unprecedented among post-War Austrian politicians. This hostility was not altogether new, for shortly before the October 1973 Middle East War, Kreisky had angered Israelis by closing the transit-camp for Soviet Jews at Schoenau Castle and coldly ignored the appeals of Golda Meir to reconsider his decision. Nevertheless his action had widespread support among Austrians, who did not wish to see their country become an Arab-Israeli battleground. Moreover, he had not closed Austria altogether to Russian-Jewish emigrants, a fact which was not lost on the Israeli government.

BUT THE WIESENTHAL AFFAIR had clearly activated his dislike of what he took to be "Zionist" interference in Austria's internal affairs. He now claimed that in every nationalism, but especially Zionism, there was an element of racism and intolerance. He proffered his belief that "there is no Jewish nation, only a Jewish religious community (*Religionsgemeinschaft*) or a community of faith." Kreisky even declared that the concept of a Jewish people was "unscientific", a standpoint which delighted the PLO and led the Israeli Foreign Ministry to ask for a clarification which he promptly characterised as "impudent arrogance." To those among his critics who accused him of self-hatred he responded by saying that "the fact of being a Jew is for me without meaning" and angrily denied that he was a "Jewish anti-Semite like Marx." Kreisky's argument—that since he did not belong to the Jewish community he could not betray something to which he was not attached—had a certain logic. Yet in his anxiety to be more Austrian than the Austrians, "to prove his total separation from everything Jewish", he tended to undermine his own case. Press comment in both Germany and Austria did not fail to point up the malaise concealed behind Kreisky's pronouncements on the Wiesenthal Affair.

Der Spiegel (17 November 1975) quoted extracts from an interview with the Chancellor by the Israeli journalist Zeev Barth which reinforced this suspicion. Kreisky was quoted as saying that Wiesenthal came "from a quite different milieu" (the *Ostjuden* again!) and that he had harmed the good name of Austria. *"Der Mann muss verschwinden"* was his unequivocal verdict. Questioned as to what he meant by "Mafia methods", the Chancellor thundered that he would not tolerate any cross-examination before the Israeli or Jewish public and that he had been subjected to "unheard-of impudence." Kreisky's parting salvo (apparently intended as a witticism) made headlines round the world. "*Wenn die Juden ein Volk sind, so ist es ein mieses Volk.* (If the Jews are a people, then they are a wretched people.)" Significantly in a letter to *Der Spiegel* a week later Kreisky qualified this remark as follows: *"Ein Volk, das keines ist, kann also auch kein mieses sein."*

At the same time he escalated his attacks on Wiesenthal, claiming that he had evidence to show that the latter had indeed collaborated with the *Gestapo* during the War. This wild insinuation did not prevent him from continuing to defend Herr Peter's proven Nazi past. The Chancellor's confrontation tactics did not escape criticism in Austria itself where the anti-fascist resistance (*Widerstandsbewegung*) protested vigorously as did the local Jewish community and also the Communist organ, the *Volkstimme*. Even within the SPOE there was much uneasiness about Kreisky's insistence on a court-battle and an evident desire to cool tempers. Nevertheless, public opinion was too hostile to Wiesenthal to worry unduly about the affair, and Kreisky's popularity suffered no decline.

Interestingly enough, the most vocal support for Kreisky's attitude came from the neo-Nazis in Germany and Austria who could scarcely restrain their joy at the spectacle of a Jewish-born Chancellor eliminating their most persistent adversary. By the end of 1975 Kreisky had become a patriotic hero for the advocates of radical *völkisch* nationalism, an honorary "Aryan" *par excellence*. The *Deutsche National-Zeitung* loudly approved the Chancellor's outbursts against "boundless Zionist intolerance" and his rejection of any special loyalty to Jewish concerns. It enthusiastically publicised his protestations of loyalty to the Austrian *Heimat*. Here was a *deutschnational* leader after their own heart, a man whose ancestors on both sides of the family had been German-speaking teachers, doctors, *Reichstag* deputies and Habsburg officials for centuries.[2] The neo-Nazis had no doubts about the

[2] Kreisky's book *Die Zeit, in der wir leben* (Vienna, 1978) expounds on this theme.

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true meaning of Kreisky's attacks on Wiesenthal. *"Kriesky will die Aussöhnung mit den früheren Nationalsozialisten* (Kreisky wants a reconciliation with the ex-Nazis)." Thanks to this Austro-Marxist Jewish Chancellor they had finally achieved social respectability.

Right-wing Austrians could now feel justified in their belief that it was better to have been an *SS*-man between 1938 and 1945 than to be an anti-fascist in the 1970s. Had not Kreisky made it clear that the file was finally to be closed on the past, that the persecutors of yesterday were to be welcomed back into the national fold? In their own anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish propaganda they could now freely invoke the indubitable authority of the Austrian Chancellor. Even in his latest book, Kreisky has repeated his earlier charges that "orthodox Zionism" is a form of "racism."

The Arab world was as enthused as the neo-Nazis by Kreisky's stance in the Wiesenthal Affair and in subsequent pronouncements on the Middle East conflict. In an interview in the Beirut daily *Al Anwar* (20 November 1975), Kreisky was reported as saying:

> "I am the only one who can stand up to him [Wiesenthal] because of my Jewish origin, anybody else trying to stand up to him would immediately be accused of being anti-Semitic and against the Jews."

Such declarations were naturally grist to the mill of the pro-Arab propaganda machine. Kreisky was depicted as striking a blow against "Zionist" political pressures, intimidation and efforts to discredit the Palestinian cause. Anti-Nazi witchhunts, according to this version of the affair, were nothing but a diversion by Zionists against their own "fascist" crimes in Palestine! Protests against Kreisky were dismissed as an orchestrated conspiracy to remove from office a politician who favoured a "non-racist" solution to the Palestinian question. *Free Palestine* in its December 1975 issue approvingly quoted Kreisky as follows:

> "I don't submit to Zionism. I reject it. It is true I am of Jewish origin and that my family is Jewish, but this does not mean I have a special commitment to the Zionist State and the Israelis. I reject that completely. . . . When Zionists ask those of Jewish faith outside Israel to be bound by a special commitment to the State of Israel and to work for it as though they were Israeli citizens, they are adopting a wrong political line which leads to the isolation of these Jewish citizens from their national motherland and leaves them forever isolated in their communities . . . there is nothing which binds me to Israel or to what is called the Jewish 'people' or to Zionism."

THE PALESTINIANS WERE particularly appreciative of Kreisky's warm sympathy for their cause. The PLO leader Yasser Arafat (in an interview broadcast on Austrian TV) thanked him publicly for "bravely resisting Zionist blackmail attempts", following the siege of OPEC headquarters in Vienna in December 1975. The six terrorists led by the Venezuelan "Carlo" had at one point held hostage all the oil ministers of the OPEC countries, including Sheik Yamani of Saudi Arabia. Their action had been designed to strike a blow for the so-called Arab "rejection front", yet though they had murdered three people Kreisky gave them free passage out of Austria without much hesitation. No doubt his primary objective was to "save lives", but the speed of his capitulation suggested that, as in the Schoenau Castle affair two years earlier, he was a soft target for terrorist demands. Hence it is not surprising to find that Kreisky has consistently refused to condemn PLO terrorism even while pursuing his mediation efforts in the Middle East. After the massacre of innocent civilians on the Tel-Aviv highway in March 1978, Kreisky's reaction was breathtakingly cool. He described them as "victims of Israel's short-sighted policy" which denied Palestinians the right of self-determination.[3] The latter had disproved Israel's contention that they did not exist "in the most terrible manner." In other words, it was the Israeli government (and not the PLO which had allegedly been pursuing "a rather moderate policy") which was ultimately responsible for the massacre. Following these tactless remarks the Austrian trade-union federation felt obliged to express its regret to the Histadrut for "statements belittling this act of terrorism as being the result of Israeli Government policy. Terrorism is no way to peace. . . ."

NONE OF THIS HAS STOPPED Kreisky in his capacity as chairman of the Socialist International fact-finding mission on the Middle East from constantly maintaining that the PLO is ready to recognise Israel and respect its sovereignty.[4] Not only does he regard the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians but he has consistently insisted that only by reaching an agreement with it can peace be achieved in the area. In

[3] President Sadat on the other hand described the PLO operation as a "sad and tragic event", an "irresponsible action."

[4] Kreisky's beliefs on the recognition of Israel were repudiated by the PLO, which denied that it was prepared to end its opposition to the Zionist State and reaffirmed that its strategic aims remained unchanged. See *Free Palestine* (March 1977), p.6. See also "Kreisky urges PLO participation in Peace Talks", *Free Palestine* (May 1976), and Joseph Finklestone's interview with Dr Kreisky in the *Jewish Chronicle* (6 May 1977) where he sweepingly dismissed in one sentence the claim that a Palestinian State might be "dangerous" to Israel. "It is stupid to argue that such a highly organized country as Israel, with such an army as Israel's, need fear such a State."

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Kreisky's opinion the Palestinian issue is the heart of the conflict and it can only be resolved by complete Israeli withdrawal from *all* occupied territories, and the creation of an independent Palestinian State. This view would be more plausible if Kreisky had not shown such a one-sided disregard for Israel's legitimate security needs and spent so much energy in attacking Zionism while totally ignoring Arab responsibilities in perpetuating the conflict. Moreover, though he has never publicly denied Israel's right to exist as a State, his ideological view of the conflict is such as to completely undercut the legitimacy of the national movement that created the Jewish State. In an interview for a special supplement on the Arab world in *Die Presse* (January 1978), Kreisky spelled out his premises.

> "In my opinion, the Jews are no nation. For me, the different Jewish groups are communities of fate. . . . Jews live everywhere in the world. They have much more in common in both appearance and way of life with their host peoples than they have with each other. . . . There exist jet-black Jews, Indian Jews, and Mongolian Jews."

Interestingly enough this position is remarkably close to Article 20 of the Palestinian National Covenant which also insists that the Jews are not a nation and that Zionism is therefore a false, artificial, and reactionary phenomenon: "Judaism, in its character as a religion, is not a nationality with an independent existence." It is no accident that Yasser Arafat always refers to the Jews as a *religious* group when speaking of the future Palestinian State in which Christian, Jew, and Muslim will live in harmony. The point behind this is that only Palestinian *Arabs* would possess *national* rights in this "secular, democratic State." Dr Kreisky, who has been so generous in his abuse of Zionism, has never gone on record to criticise the discriminatory premises behind this concept of Palestinian Arab nationalism.

THE UNDERLYING REASON for this double-standard lies in the Austro-Marxist tradition of which Kreisky is perhaps the last representative.

Since his youth, the Austrian Chancellor was a great admirer of Otto Bauer, whose theories provided the intellectual inspiration for the Viennese Austro-Marxist school. Like Bauer he comes from a Germanised *grossbürgerlich* background which was ultra-assimilationist. In this milieu the transition to socialist ideology did not exclude a powerful dose of *deutschnationalismus* but it very definitely ruled out any sympathy with the Jewish national renaissance. Otto Bauer like his fellow Austro-Marxists, Karl Kautsky and Viktor Adler, went to great lengths to deny the Jews of Eastern Europe the right to their cultural-national autonomy and self-determination. Such a demand even when it was made by Jewish workers was considered neither viable nor desirable. The theories of the Austro-Marxist school insisted that the "Jewish people" was a fictive entity, doomed to extinction because it lacked a common language or territory. They were at best a "community of fate" (one of Kreisky's favourite terms) whose cohesion was only a temporary product of socio-economic circumstances. Anti-Semitism alone had created the mirage of Jewish "unity"—and once it dissolved in the Classless Socialist Society of the Future, the "chimerical" Jewish nation would disappear with it. When Zionism emerged, predicated on the belief that territorial concentration in Palestine would crystallise the renaissance of the Jewish nation, the Austro-Marxists decried it as a romantic, utopian delusion.[5]

The success of Zionism in achieving its aim did not lead to a thoughtful self-critical revision of Marxist theory. On the contrary the belief that "complete assimilation" was the only progressive solution to the "Jewish question" persisted, in spite of the Nazi genocide and the creation of Israel—indeed it was now transformed into a dogmatic *idée fixe*. The assertions of Kautsky, Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and the pre-War Austro-Marxists that the Jews were not a nation had a certain appearance of validity in their time. But the repetition of these claims *after* 1948 involves the substitution of ideological fiction for reality. It has led many on the Left into the cul-de-sac of neo-anti-Semitism in the desperate effort to make Zionism the scapegoat for their badly mistaken prognoses. Instead of adapting theory to the facts they have sought to argue that Jewish nationalism *must* by its very nature be separatist, reactionary, and ultimately even racist.

It is astonishing that an experienced, pragmatic statesman like Bruno Kreisky should, when it comes to the Jewish problem, have fallen victim to this dogmatic mode of thinking. But the phenomenon is neither new nor is it especially mysterious. Long before the emergence of Israel as an independent State, assimilated Jewish Marxists expressed their ethnic death-wish in the demand that the Jewish collectivity should disappear. Bruno Kreisky's recent outbursts against Israel and the "warped" mentality of the *Ostjuden* may best be seen as a footnote to that Central European tradition.

[5] For an analysis of the continuity in attitudes from Viktor Adler to Bruno Kreisky, see my article, "An Austrian Variant on Socialist Anti-Semitism", *Patterns of Prejudice* (July–August 1974), Vol. 8 no. 4, I–II. My forthcoming book, *Social Democracy and the Jewish Question: Germany and Austria-Hungary before 1918*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul) explores the historical roots of this phenomenon.

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Zinoviev's Letter to the World

By Raisa Lert

THIS BOOK could be called a definitive work of genius. To read it through from start to finish is practically impossible. If, however, we assume that this postulated result has taken place, and that the reader has read it through, he will then be confronted with a mathematically faultless conflict, implicit in the situation described in the book—the conflict between logical conclusion and practical action.

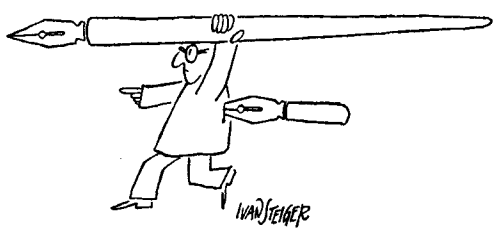
The logical conclusion to be drawn from what he has read is to commit suicide. The Chatterer (one of the stereotype characters in the book) arrives at a comparatively easy resolution of the time-honoured clash between theory and practice. Having undergone the requisite bureaucratic procedures, he is issued with a voucher entitling him to an officially countenanced and officially organised suicide. The real-life reader with inclinations to fantasy (the reasons for these inclinations being self-evident) does not have access to such privileges. He has to make shift for himself. He must, on his own initiative, get hold of a good strong nail, a length of stout rope, a good quality electric drill, and himself drill a hole in the reinforced concrete wall of a present-day flat. Then he must himself drive a wooden plug into the hole, firmly enough for the weight of his body not to pull it out again—but first he must work out the relationship between his own height and the (probably inadequate) floor-to-ceiling height of his flat, otherwise all his efforts may turn out to be in vain.

And finally, when everything is ready, it may turn out that all the plans of the would-be suicide (even the first inklings of plans of which he himself is unaware) have long ago been entered on the files and dossiers of The Colleague. For, as is clear from the latest sociological investigations, it is a man's closest associates who inform on him. According to the classified data of The Sociologist, 97.3% of the wives of intellectuals are informers, 103.16% of mistresses, 99.99% of best friends, and so on. So even the most meticulous preparations for suicide are probably doomed to failure. They will be regarded as an attempt to subvert the existing social order, and result in the confinement of the voluntary suicide in a psychiatric prison—not a fate one would willingly aspire to, and certainly not at the cost of so much effort. In any case, without good contacts in the trade it will probably be impossible to get hold of a good nail or good quality rope.

So there is nothing to do except go on living.

PLEASE DO NOT REGARD the above merely as an exercise in parody or irony.

There is, of course, a certain element of parodic exaggeration, but then the book itself is saturated with parody and irony, if "irony" can be considered an adequate term to describe this savage, lacerating satire. Probably neither Swift, nor Saltykov-Shchedrin, to both of whom the author is compared on the dust-jacket [of the Russian-language Lausanne edition], ever achieved such merciless insight, such articulation of despair. There is no need to analyse or quantify his talent, to talk of "a literary indictment." . . . I doubt if the author gave any thought to literature, or had any intention of framing an indictment. Does anyone think that



THIS is a translation of a "samizdat" review of ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV's satirical novel "The Yawning Heights" (published this month in Britain by The Bodley Head and later in the US by Random House, in a translation by Gordon Clough). Its publication in the West in a Russian language edition two years ago caused Zinoviev to be sacked from all his university posts, deprived of his academic degrees, and driven into emigration. He is currently giving lectures on philosophy and logic at Munich University.

RAISA LERT, the author of this review, lives in Moscow; she has been a member of the Communist Party since 1926 and, remarkably, appears still not to have been expelled from it. For a time she was the secretary of the "samizdat" journal "Twentieth Century", edited by Roy Medvedev; but recently she broke with him over his criticism of Alexander Ginzburg and other imprisoned dissenters. She writes "samizdat" essays on social, political, and historical themes.

For an account of the book and its author, see Helen von Ssachno's "News from Nowhere in Ibansk" and "Zinoviev's Paradoxes" (ENCOUNTER, May 1977 and February 1978).

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Anne Frank wrote her diary as an indictment of Fascism?

Curiously enough, this rude, malicious book, almost devoid of emotion in the conventional sense of the word, and at times grossly obscene, nevertheless reads like a lyrical diary. The whole book is nothing but the impassioned sobbing of an intellect, the wailing of a suffocating mind, of violated and corrupted thought. Everything else in this imaginary society derives from this: the inhumanity of the life-style presented by the author, the grotesque description of The Snouts, their faces smeared with red caviare, who "had taken up the fashion of strolling the streets with their flies undone", the spiritual stability of the Milk Bars and the material stability of the Queues, the mishmash of feeble protest and stout-hearted cowardice, ambition, servility, treachery, and rapaciousness, emotional and intellectual bankruptcy—all this results when thought and expression are prohibited. A state of forcibly propagated unthinkingness, an ever-increasing spiritual barrenness, is created by people whose authority is in inverse relation to their intelligence. When life is dominated by non-thought, the result is moral collapse.

YOU CANNOT ARGUE with the fantastic, or require that satirical protest be written according to conventional rules. It is pointless to try and prove that in real life it is not always possible to distinguish cause and effect. Nor do I intend to challenge the author on the question of whether the society set up in Ibansk by The Consumers and Consumeresses of Red and Black Caviare represents an "Ism", and, if so, what sort of Ism. In my view a Milk Bar is a Milk Bar, whatever kind of Ism is written over the entrance, and the same applies to vouchers for power, vouchers for caviare, vouchers for Paris; for dresses created out of painted chiffon by fashionable dressmakers; and for suicide vouchers. As for the ideological connection between the "Pioneers of Modern Thought"[1] on the one hand and The Troglodytes and Officials on the other, it has been proclaimed by generations of Troglodytes and Officials in every kind of society. The bones of the pioneers have in any case long since rotted to dust—they cannot object. But I see I have left the realm of fantasy and begun to impinge upon inadmissible reality.

Whether this is an Ism or not is neither here nor there. Zinoviev is indeed little interested in the origins and provenance of the dreadful society of which he has given us a hypothetical picture. To paraphrase the words of one of his characters, we can say that what interests him is not the past, but the present, and the future contained in the present. His book is a satirical tirade, not a historical treatise (although a satirical tirade is itself an ineffaceable historical fact, and its fantastic quality need not prevent it from passing into history). The same applies to premonitions of doom, which in the past have usually appeared in poetic form. If we look, not at the many specimens of "formless poetry" to be found scattered through *The Yawning Heights*, but at a good old classic, then these lines of Alexander Blok,[2] so frequently quoted in present-day memoirs, might provide a fitting epigraph to the book:

Oh, children, could you only know
The cold and gloom of days to come.

THIS IS AN EXTREMELY difficult book to read. It literally suffocates you, as the quintessence of baseness, evil, deceit, appalling immorality and obtuseness takes your breath away. The reader does not savour the bouquet of a master distiller's liqueur, but gasps for breath, his eyes bulging from their sockets, as he takes wild gulps of incredibly strong neat alcohol. Can there really be no gleam of hope in this "dark kingdom"? But you cannot put the book down. And when you have finished reading it, in some strange way you feel better. Why should this be? Is it because there is no way of evading it? Maybe evil is overdrawn, and good completely excluded from the picture; but when evil is presented in such gross, forthright, palpable terms you cannot simply turn aside, close your eyes, and sprinkle a few drops of eau-de-cologne.

One of the ideas that came to me (inappropriately, perhaps) as I read *The Yawning Heights* is one I became dimly aware of fifteen years ago, when I saw Kozintsev's film version of *Don Quixote*, although it had not occurred to me when I read Cervantes' book. This idea has now returned and come into sharper focus.

What are Don Quixote and Sancho Panzo without each other? The first is spirit devoid of compassionate human love, a flight of fancy without any physical form, without the smell of the hearth, the everyday problems that most of us have to contend with—and therefore he is alien to us. And what is Sancho Panzo without Don Quixote? He is a human being transformed into a Snout, bestialised, falling headlong first to the moral level of the sober degree-holder Carasco, and then lower still, to the level of an animal. No degree, not even the title of Doctor, can help him.

If humans are to stay human, we need Don Quixotes, for they represent freedom of thought, free flights of fantasy, self-sacrifice, a sense of honour, and the desire to convert love and noble sentiments into action. But all this is nothing, it

[1] In the Soviet Union this expression normally refers to Marx and Lenin.—*Translator's Note.*

[2] The last couplet of Blok's poem "*Golos iz khora* (A Voice from the Chorus)", completed in 1914.—*Translator's Note.*

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collapses and sinks into the mire, into the power of The Snouts, unless Don Quixote has his Sancho to protect him—prosaic, kind-hearted, honest to the core, but shrewd and possessed of an inexhaustible sense of humour. And if this Sancho turns into a Snout, then Don Quixote is lost.

Maybe this has something to do with the problem of the relationship of the intellectual to the people? This is a question that seldom arouses much hope, or even interest.

THE AUTHOR whose book is the subject of this non-academic analysis is not the first to be called offensive, pessimistic, unenlightening, and so on. The same accusations were levelled at Jonathan Swift, and at our own Saltykov-Shchedrin:[3] their writings were not full of "positive" characters. But rather than invoke these mighty names, I will turn to other writers, lesser in status but more recent, such as the socialist Zamyatin, author of the anti-utopian cautionary tale *We*; the anti-fascist George Orwell, discoverer of the phenomenon of "doublethink" (the "carping critics" of Ibansk considered this term too honourable to apply to themselves), and inventor of the terms "Ministry of Truth" and "Ministry of Love"; and Sasha

[3] Nineteenth-century writer and journalist, officially approved in the Soviet Union for his scathing attacks on Tsarist society.—*Translator's Note.*

Searching for the Exchange of Ideas

Moscow

THE MEN *who run the Soviet Union have never liked Eurocommunism, the movement among Communist parties of such countries as Italy and Spain that rejects the Soviet Union as a model or ideological guide.*

Last summer, the doctrine was discussed here in an underground journal called "Searches." Two of the editors even called themselves Eurocommunists. Now Soviet authorities have seized their files, searched their apartments and apparently begun a criminal investigation on charges of "dissemination of slanderous inventions injurious to Soviet society and the state order."

One of the journal's Eurocommunists is Raissa Borisovna Lert, 73, a journalist and longtime Communist Party member. The other is Pyotr Yegides, a philosopher who teaches the aesthetics of design in Moscow. "I now consider myself a dissident, 'one who thinks differently' in our language", Mrs Lert said. "We don't have socialism here", Mr Yegides added, "not even a spark of it."

BESIDES THE WORK *of these two Eurocommunists, "Searches" in its five issues before the authorities cracked down published article. by adherents of the Russian Orthodox Church and by an economist who supports the idea of private property. There was even an article by a monarchist.*

But the first double issue of the magazine, produced in 13 typewritten carbon copies last June, also included excerpts from a book by the leader of the Spanish Communist Party, Santiago Carrillo. His memoir, "Eurocommunism and the State", which accuses the Soviet Union of leaving intact the repressive apparatus of Stalinism, was published in Moscow.

"THE BASIC IDEA **of the journal was a dialogue of people who have varied and sometimes contradictory views", Mrs Lert said. "'Searches' is an exchange of ideas, searching for a way out of the difficult and complex problems besetting our society."**

Mrs Lert, who has been confined to her home with double pneumonia, said that on 25 January five men came to her apartment with a search warrant. They took most of the day to rummage through her papers, seizing not only all copies of the magazine's fifth issue that were there but all her mail, as well. Then, she said, they made her get out of bed so they could search under the mattress.

Similar searches were carried out at the homes of the six other editors, as well as on the students and friends of the editors who had helped type and distribute the journal.

SO FAR, THERE HAVE *been no arrests. Mrs Lert, a party member since 1926, has not been expelled, although she thinks this is because she is old and ill.*

Mrs Lert was well known in this country in the 1930s and 1940s, the Stalin years, when by her own account she was a loyalist. She even edited the newspaper "Moskovskaya Pravda" for a while and says she changed her views only after Stalin's death in 1953 and Nikita Khrushchev's subsequent denunciations of his terror.

In retirement, she became more active in less orthodox circles, working with the dissident Marxist historian Roy Medvedev, she says, and finally founding her own journal.

MANY DISSIDENTS **in their youth were active, enthusiastic supporters of the Stalinist cause and say that they realised what had happened only much later. Friends believe Mrs Lert, who is Jewish, was disillusioned by Stalin's anti-Semitic repressions in the late 1940s.**

Mr Yegides was arrested in Stalin's purges. After the Warsaw Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 he was dismissed from the faculty of the Rostov University for taking part in a protest.

Craig R. Whitney
in the INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE (Paris)

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Chorny,[4] little known inside the Soviet Union, whose mournful, pessimistic satires anticipated the songs of Alexander Galich, and who may well have been the first writer of "formless" poetry.

One point must admittedly be made for the sake of formal accuracy in this informal analysis: except in the case of Zamyatin and Galich, nearly all the "malicious" writings of the above-named authors were published, and reprinted in numerous editions, in their own countries. The "formless" poets of Ibansk could never hope for this, even in the most liberal period of their history—which some called The Era of Rehabilitation, others The Era of Delusion. In this connection it is worth noting that a book such as Sasha Chorny's two volumes on *Satire*, containing some savage portraits not only of The Thinkers, Claimants, and Wives of his time, but also of some of The Statesmen and Officials, could be published in St Petersburg in 1910, when political reaction was at its height. Evidently The Officials of that time were tyros compared to their counterparts in Ibansk.

I MENTION THESE NAMES not because I am searching for Zinoviev's literary ancestors and precursors, but in order to demonstrate that, in fact, he does not have any. Zinoviev's book is unique both in form and in its overflowing content. All the writers I have mentioned were professionals, and most of them were interested in literature as an art form. When, in their writings, they moved outside their temporal or geographical context, or incorporated politics into daily life, or invented subject matter, searched for symbolic imagery (such as "he's eaten the siskin!"), their main concern was the art of writing, and how to convert material life into that art.

In Zinoviev's case we are faced with a different kind of author and a different manner of writing. As I have said, I do not think he is out to produce artistic effects or to create a work of art. His concern is with semi-fantastic reportage. In order to give meaning to the facts he presents he gives them a sardonic interpretation, and their formal presentation (which may, perhaps, only appear to be formal) is constantly and mercilessly parodied.

But the result is a work of art: a social fantasy: a satire. How this result is achieved is a mystery.

THE YAWNING HEIGHTS produces an initial, but misleading, impression of chaos. (I remember that Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* produced the same impression on some readers. By this I do not mean to place Zinoviev alongside Faulkner as a "literary innovator"—I mean only that first impressions can be deceptive.) This is not the chaos which, as we know from our reading, exists in a flat after an official search has taken place, but rather the deliberate selection of documents to be taken away before the investigators arrive. There is not much time. And naturally things get thrown into the suitcase without much concern about what order they go in—they can be sorted out later. You just take what you think you will need.

The author sets out certain facts with precision (or apparent precision), simultaneously creating in broad, vivid strokes a wonderful caricature of what he has written. Then he floods the scene with a merciless, brilliant, imaginative light and shows us that under this harsh, pitiless light reality appears fantastic. Accurately (or with apparent accuracy) he reveals the relationship between different groups and individuals within the society he presents, and projects the lines along which these mutual relationships might develop. Everything is laid bare and illuminated by the searchlight of the intellect, in what is at once a logical analysis, a sociological analysis—and a parody of both. It is at once photographic record, satire, diary, memoir, and phantasmagoria; a psalm, and a shaggy-dog story; a philosophical essay, and a travesty of philosophy; a lyrical lament through clenched teeth and an unrestrained, obscene tirade of "lavatory humour." And all these different elements blend into and develop out of one another. The machinery for the suppression of thought is stripped down to the last detail, exploded, and irrevocably condemned. This is what it is, and this is what it will lead to. If the author's researches are correct, then his rage—the rage of thought confronted with meaninglessness—is justified. And the outbursts of emotion, the flashes of impassioned bitterness that appear here and there in this otherwise self-controlled satire are the more effective for being very few and very brief.

I, at any rate, have never read or heard of anything to compare with this book. It even seems inappropriate to discuss what one agrees with or disagrees with in it; one might as well ask, do you agree with Archpriest Avvakum,[5] or with the Book of Ecclesiastes.

In any case, to agree with Zinoviev is just as dangerous as to disagree with him—dangerous not in the Ibansk sense, but from a purely intellectual point of view. Unlike Avvakum or Ecclesiastes, Zinoviev's book is intended not to call sinners to repentance, but to flay them with scorn. His victims are ridiculed as well as denounced, and his laughter is the laughter of contempt. And the critic is

[4] Aleksandr Mikhailovich Glikberg, 1880–1932.—*Translator's Note.*

[5] Archpriest Avvakum was exiled (and burned for his beliefs) during the schism within the Russian Orthodox Church in the 17th century. He wrote an outspoken autobiography describing his sufferings and attacking his opponents.—*Translator's Note.*

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perpetually in danger of exposing his own ignorance by taking a grossly overblown flight of derision for the real thing, or mistaking the cold, bitter truth for some fantastic product of the author's invention. And let it be noted that no one—not only Troglodytes and Snouts, but also friends, lovers, sympathisers, and fellow artists—escapes derision. For example, there is a Dostoevskian quality in The Chatterer's conversation with Mazila, when he asks him this spiteful, "experimentalist" question: "How would it be if you and I were in favour?" This is in no sense a personal question. It is the statement of a moral, psychological, and social problem facing an entire class of so-called intellectuals.

I AM SETTING DOWN some random thoughts about this book after having read it. The book itself I no longer have. It is both easier and more difficult for me to write about it, because I am totally detached from the real life environment which first caused the author to begin writing and provided the original material for his satirical sketches and semi-fantastic creations.

As the author repeatedly stresses, his characters are abstractions, and I do not know anyone on whom they might be based. I have never sat in faculty meetings with one of them, or found myself in company with one at a conference, or in a queue for royalty payments or at a hairdresser's or the dressmaker's, or over a cup of tea or coffee or a glass of brandy. If, as a reader (i.e. a non-participating spectator of the social drama), I seem to recognise one of them, I can respond either with laughter and applause, or with hisses of indignation. But the essential nature of the social drama is clear to me. As a reader I can, and do, disagree with the author on many points. As an individual the author appears at times prejudiced, spiteful, and unjust. But as a satirist he is mercilessly accurate. And his accuracy is revealed above all by the fact that I, the reader—an independent, uncommitted person, whose outlook is totally different from his—recognise these people, even though I have never met them. I recognise them not as individuals, but as a social class. I know them, I know them in spite of the abstract style of the writing, the lack of psychological description, the paucity of realistic detail. Do we have to understand the psychology of Shchedrin's *Organchik*? Or of his *Gentlemen from Tashkent*? And even if it was not them I met, but other people with all the makings of Troglodytes, Thinkers, Officials, and Wives—and if I met them in other environments—what difference does that make?

Of course, in a lifetime of more than seventy years I have met others besides them. I have met people who were honourable, heroic, self-sacrificing, good-natured. And yet . . .

Yet somehow noble qualities
The satirist will hide,
And every satirist in his work
Just shows the minus side. . . .

When reality provides such a wealth of material for furious satire, then furious satire will result. When the mouths of the honourable are stopped, when the self-sacrificing are pelted with filth, the good-natured are made bitter and the heroic are turned into bone-meal—then furious satire will appear and it will appear in spite of the sky-blue, unattainable dream of all The Controllers in the world, the dream of a sober-minded, decorous, amenable satire, the dream that this amenable satire will somehow give birth to geniuses.

Amenable satirists are ten-a-penny, but somehow *none of them display genius, or even talent.* No Shchedrins or Swifts, nor the Bertolt Brechts and Kurt Vonneguts of our own time, are numbered among them. And the problem that faces schoolchildren and Second Bank Deputies is: How is this to be explained?

How movingly and convincingly do Deputies and Managers of all ranks express their indignation at the "unrelieved pessimism" of the satirists, at their offensive language, their lack of decorum, and the absence in their writings of any "clear" or "positive" characters!

So let us have a few words on optimism and pessimism.

THE "MERCILESS PESSIMISM" for which the satirist is upbraided never has provided, and never can provide, a purpose in life for any individual who has ever lived. It is human nature to aspire to happiness. "Naked I came into the world, and as everyone does, I reached out for happiness . . . ." Frankly, I suspect that even Schopenhauer was not always entirely serious. Of course, pessimism sometimes comes into fashion. So does optimism, so do lots of things. But only true life and true experience can provide the basis for a genuinely optimistic outlook on life and response to the world. People are happy when things go well and sad when they go badly. It's as simple as that.

There is, however, such a thing as "official optimism" (official pessimism is apparently unheard of). This variety of optimism is a man-made product, and although no more palatable than the synthetic caviare of Zinoviev's book, it is far more universal: weighed out and sealed up into standard ideological packages, distributed to the masses as a consumer product, along with the mass-produced plastic reproductions of formerly living ideals. Our masters are never short of either the one or the other.

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But people cannot live indefinitely on synthetic food, breathing artificial air and forcing out a smile when they are almost in tears. Dead ideals are a soil in which genuine optimism cannot flourish. The imperative need for a breath of fresh air, for freedom of thought and the open expression of emotions, makes thinking and feeling people turn to pessimism as a reaction against the optimism that is forced down their throats. For official optimism has nothing in common with true human thoughts and ideals. It has nothing to do with sorrow, and even less to do with happiness.

Pessimism is the natural and inevitable consequence of the death of ideals. In my early youth people did not fear to give up their lives for these ideals. Were these ideals genuine, were they truly beautiful and heroic? They were, and they gave rise to genuine optimism. But now they are no more. They have not been betrayed as some have said; they have not become debased and dehumanised, as others maintain; nor have they remained sacred and immaculate, as still others believe. They have simply ceased to exist. "The great god Pan is dead!"

For what no longer inspires people to self-sacrifice and heroic deeds, no longer instils hope or creates happiness, cannot be considered living. The beliefs and ideals of those courageous, honourable, and humane people who took the name of revolutionaries, and rose up against the filth, baseness, and evil of the old world, died when those people died; or maybe even earlier. And that does not give succeeding generations the moral right to set up scrap-heaps on their graves. The old world, as Saltykov-Shchedrin has shown, was base, ugly, and soulless enough; and its opponents were right to criticise it. So how can it now be permissible—either morally or theoretically—to hold those critics to blame now that the usurpers of their name have caused a far more loathsome mass of fungus to grow on the debris of the old world?

But that is another story. . . .

THERE WERE MANY INTELLIGENT PEOPLE—including revolutionaries—who gave warning that a new despotism might arise. Their warnings were not heeded. There were many creative people—again, including revolutionaries—who gave warning that a despotic social system was taking shape. Their warnings were not heeded. Now a creative writer, who is also a philosopher and a mathematician, has given us a dreadful picture of the future development of that social system. He is quite a young man—at any rate, the world had assumed its present form before he became a sentient being. He investigates the world, and the prospects of its future development, as he finds it, without any concern for how it came to be what it is. This is understandable—he is not a historian. Theoretically, of course, the author of the satire is aware that under the "weeds of evil" he sees lie buried not only the corpses of millions of people, but the corpses of great ideals. But for him the weeds themselves, now on the offensive, threatening to engulf and suffocate every living thing in the world, are the greatest evil. Hoarsely, he yells a warning. In this case satirical pessimism is more than merely appropriate—it is like a draught of neat alcohol given to a man who is freezing to death.

Will anyone hear him? Those who can hear him, and stop to think, are small and weak. The great and strong can neither hear nor think. And they will not freeze to death—they can take expensive brandy instead.

A HUMAN BEING trampled and crushed, an ideal defiled and stained with blood—these are sufficient reasons to be pessimistic. And so, although I have been brought up since childhood "in the spirit of optimism", I can now fully understand Alexander Zinoviev.

I do not entirely share his views but I do understand; and for one person to understand another is a great deal. I can appreciate his pessimism, although my own pessimism is of a rather different cast, and is in some ways still more hopeless: I have no faith either in the wisdom of The Managers, or the humanism of The Presidents or in the kindheartedness of The Bankers. But in other ways my outlook is brighter, for I continue to believe in the human spirit, in human solidarity, in noble Don Quixotes and their faithful retainers.

They are rare; very rare. But I am hopeful (hope, as they say, springs eternal) that their numbers will increase, and that they can help mankind to drag itself out of a pit of filth from which at present I can see no escape.

Perhaps it is the pessimists who are fumigating our planet in readiness for the Don Quixotes: this planet on which the sweet stench of official optimism might otherwise suffocate us all.

So I welcome the appearance of Zinoviev's book. It does at least teach us a half-forgotten art: to think, and not merely give consent.

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LETTERS

David Irving's Defence

HAVING BEEN away from the United Kingdom for many months, I have only just read Karl-Heinz Janssen's article (ENCOUNTER, November). May I comment, to ensure that its larger inaccuracies do not join the growing catalogue of legends about me?

It is not true that I invited either *SS*-General Karl Wolff or a dozen "Right-wing extremists" to attend the symposium. I had no idea that they were going to be present, nor—I must add—had I had any contact whatever with Wolff, until the moment when this elderly, upright, white-haired gentleman came up to me afterwards and shook my hand. A photographer immediately flashed the harmless scene, and I heard Miss Gitta Serenyi, a freelance British journalist present, cackle: "Did you get them both? Excellent!" No doubt the photograph will one day be flourished, with suitable caption, and another legend will be born.

It is true, as millions of German TV viewers saw—on the evening news programme—that the "Marxologist" Iring Fetscher lost his temper at the Aschaffenburg symposium when I adduced the 99.08 per cent *Ja* vote in the April 1938 referendum as evidence of Hitler's popular support. But it was not I who referred to "free elections"—I merely ridiculed Fetscher's anguished claim that the referendum had been faked.

> IRVING: "There were 49 million *Yes*-votes. He's talking of electoral faking, but he hasn't got the slightest proof of it!"
>
> FETSCHER (*banging his fist on the table*): "How can you talk such rubbish! You can't be claiming that there was freedom under a totalitarian state! Listen, my father was shot by the Nazis! I am not going to allow the German people to be defamed like this!"

Now, a TV viewer who knew the Fetscher family has since written to me, enclosing photocopied letters from Fetscher's mother Cläre, stating that his father, far from having been "shot by the Nazis", was gunned down by Soviet troops when he went out to greet them as liberators on 8 May 1945.

Unfortunately, what my friend Janssen did not grasp was my insistence on seeing *Wartime* proof establishing a chain of command between Hitler and the mass murder of the West European Jews. Both Janssen's heroes, Gerald Fleming and Werner Maser, merely dished up rather tepid post-War declarations. In fact, as I made clear in a letter published by *Die Zeit* the following week, my—still unclaimed—offer of $1,000 is for anyone producing explicit Wartime written evidence that Hitler was even aware that the systematic liquidation of these West European Jews was going on, i.e., that he knew of the criminal goings-on at Auschwitz, Treblinka, and the other sites. I am always ready to see my thesis disproved, but so far it still stands.

DAVID IRVING

London

. . . and Two Replies

FIRST, A FEW FACTS about the fate of my father. He was until 1934 a professor at the *Technische Hochschule* in Dresden, at which time he was removed by the Nazis and forbidden to leave. He continued to live in Dresden, practising medicine; and he was active in building a group of anti-Nazis of various political persuasions (Christian, democratic, Communist). At the end of the War he was assigned to make contact with the Allies, and on the 8th of May he and two other members of the anti-Nazi group tried to make their way to the Soviet headquarters in Dresden. En route he was killed on the Pragerstrasse by an isolated *SS*-unit; he was carrying a Red Cross flag in his hand. Mr David Irving who is always criticising historians for not consulting the sources and establishing the true facts is here, as elsewhere, wide of the mark.

2. As for the Nazi electoral methods, there is no end of evidence about the role of intimidation, violations of ballot secrecy, and even faking of ballots. The Munich Institute for Contemporary History can help Mr Irving here. To be sure, I do not doubt that until the outbreak of War in 1939 a majority of the German people accepted Nazi rule. What strikes me as monstrous is the notion that Hitler's 98% approval represented a genuine referendum, expressing the true feelings of all the people. Just think of that minority of prisoners and camp inmates, of teachers and officials who were fired, of old liberals and socialists, all of whom voted or would have voted *Nein*! I remember hearing from my parents how the No-voters were fearful of going to the polls. The whole affair was simply a propaganda stratagem. When Hitler wanted to know what the people were really thinking, he turned to the political reports of his *Gestapo*. At the risk of persecution and arrest, many German non- and anti-Nazis preferred not to make a vain formal show of opposition.

3. As for Mr Irving's connections with Nazis, old and new, there is the fact that he has often given talks to such organisations; and the neo-Nazi press in Germany has given widespread publicity to his views and his books. Let me cite the *National-Zeitung* of 14 July 1978 where Wilfred von Oven, an ex-associate of Goebbels, praises Irving's work and, incidentally, dismisses me as a "representative of the extreme Left." This is in the leading organ of right-wing radicalism in Germany, in which anyone who accepts 8th May 1945 as a liberation from Fascism, and anyone who approves of the sentencing of war criminals guilty of genocide and aggressive war is put down as "a tool of the Soviets."

In my view it is unconscionable that David Irving be allowed to parade as an innocent observer of historical events, an objective non-partisan researcher. His one-sided use of original sources, his exaggerated if not false and absurd theses—e.g., Hitler knew nothing of the murder of the Jews (and when he, at long last, managed to learn about it, immediately sent a telegram to stop it all)—is, for anyone with scholarly standards, "rubbish" . . . or, in the friendlier German word, *Quatsch*.

IRING FETSCHER

Frankfurt University
West Germany

ACCORDING to the organisers of the Aschaffenburg Conference, Mr David Irving submitted a list of some 35 names who were in one way or another associated with

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the world of the National-Socialist *"Prominenz."* He made the suggestion that these people be invited. A number of these persons, although not actually invited, turned up at the conference. Former *SS*-General Wolff was asked by Irving, during the discussion with the director of the Hitler film, Syberberg, to confirm certain things Irving had said.

In the usage of the words "free elections (*freie Wahlen*)", Irving was rather careless; he meant "*freiwillig*" or voluntary, and I believe everybody understood it as a confounding of elective choice in a totalitarian system with that in a pluralist-democratic society.

As for the idea of my suppressing his thousand-dollar offer, I can only ascribe his insistence on a written order in Hitler's own hand to his own historical incorrigibility. He airily dismisses dozens of pieces of evidence for Hitler's declared intention to destroy all Jews, including the notorious declaration of 30 January 1939—and during the War Hitler recalled that warning several times—that in the event that War came the whole of European Jewry would go under.

KARL-HEINZ JANSSEN

Die Zeit
Hamburg

Tyerman & Deutscher

MR LABEDZ is still heedless of the facts [Letters, March]. I was never editor of *The Economist* while Isaac Deutscher wrote for it. Geoffrey Crowther edited *The Economist* throughout Deutscher's association with the paper. Indeed Deutscher and I worked together on *The Economist* for only the wartime period 1940–44, when I left to join *The Times*; the chief foreign writer then and later was Barbara Ward, apart from the editor himself. There was no "platform" for Deutscher.

When I returned to edit *The Economist* in 1956 my good friend Deutscher no longer wrote for it.

DONALD TYERMAN

Westleton
Suffolk

Follies in the Middle East

Illusions of Beeley and the F.O.—By T. R. FYVEL

SIR HAROLD BEELEY, who was Foreign Office adviser to Ernest Bevin during the years of the latter's disastrous post-War policy in Mandatory Palestine, does not easily give up. In his article on "The Middle East" (ENCOUNTER, February), so as to deny the legitimate existence of Zionism and Israel, he has turned amateur historian. There are more lineal descendants of the ancient Israelites among the Palestine Arabs than the Israelis, he suggests. Jewish history, he thinks, has overestimated the role of the exile and underestimated that of conversion. Arguing against Zionism, Sir Harold might also have well cited "Jewish assimilation" in the West. But what he does not realise is that such arguments are without relevance to his case in the period about which he writes.

During this period, the late 1930s, the dominant fact was that there were millions of people in Europe—in Germany and Austria, in Poland, Hungary, Rumania, etc.—who regarded themselves as Jews with religious links to Palestine. More important than that, they had come to be regarded by large sections of their host nations as specifically Jews and thus as strangers and outsiders who were under increasingly dire pressure to leave. Now, since the Foreign Office did not want any of them to leave for Palestine, it seemed natural for Foreign Office diplomats to minimise the notion of this pressure. But when Sir Harold Beeley refers to Jews who in his view regarded the Balfour Declaration as a disaster, it would be interesting to have from him the names of Jews in responsible positions who during Hitler's run-up to the 1939 War—when (in Weizmann's words) to European Jews the world consisted of countries which they could not enter and countries where they could not stay—in these circumstances thought that the chance for at least some Jews to escape to Palestine was "a disaster."

More seriously, perhaps, Sir Harold criticises the chapters in the historian Martin Gilbert's book *Exile and Return* in which Gilbert examines Britain's Palestine policy before, during, and after the War on the basis of Foreign and Colonial Office documents now made public. Sir Harold is not happy about the effect of such early publication on members of the Foreign Service whom it may inhibit. In his view, their grievance against Martin Gilbert's book is that its message,

> "whether intentional or not, is to convey the impression that the makers and executants of our Palestine policy were objectively, and in a muted British way, partners with the Nazis in the destruction of European Jewry."

Sir Harold exaggerates somewhat in his wording, but the question is surely whether the contention is true, even up to a point. Sir Harold here describes the circumstances, but not the effects of British policy. To be sure, there was a Jewish-Arab quarrel over Palestine, and Sir Harold, quoting Neville Chamberlain, explains why in this quarrel Britain, not for any love of the Arabs but because of her Middle East strategic and oil interests, had to take the Arab side. Well and good. But the question is: Need the Foreign Office after about 1937 have been quite so zealous, so *active* in trying to stop all further Jewish immigration from Hitler's Europe into Palestine—a Foreign Office policy which by 1947 began to look like an obsession?

THE PRE-WAR YEARS, for instance, saw increasing British pressure on the Balkan countries and Turkey to stop Jewish refugees from escaping from Hitler's Europe through their territories—just in case they escaped in the direction of Palestine. Add the stonewalling tactics of

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Britain's representative at the Evian Conference on Refugees, and you can say that to the extent to which British policy thus blocked the escape of some Jewish refugees from Hitler's trap, it could be said to have doomed them.

During the War, again, schemes were put forward which sometimes seemed near-feasible for the escape of Jews through Rumania across the Black Sea, to be housed temporarily in camps in Cyprus or Cyrenaica or even Palestine. How many Jews might have been saved in this way? No one will know, because all such schemes were, for various grounds of inadvisability, turned down by British foreign policy—fully supported in this, to be sure, by the US State Department until 1944, when pressures in America created the War Refugees Board which belatedly found asylum for small numbers of Hitler's prospective victims in Turkey, Switzerland, and Sweden.

However, it was immediately after the War, with the inexperienced Ernest Bevin in charge, that the Foreign Office seemed to be dominated obsessively by two aims.

One: that all Soviet refugees and escapees in the West must be returned to Soviet authority—this was to appease Stalin.

Two: that the scattered Jewish survivors of Hitler's Holocaust must stay in Europe lest some should reach Palestine—this was to appease the Arabs.

Both policies were vain. About Stalin's response to Britain's total surrender of the principle of asylum there is little need to say anything: his response was the Berlin blockade. About the policy on Palestine—I can agree with Sir Harold Beeley that there is an Arab case and that even though the Peel Commission had in 1937 recommended it, it was hard for Britain in 1945 to envisage a Jewish state in part of the country. But need Foreign Office policy, headed by Bevin, have been quite *so abject* in its appeasement of the Arabs and quite *so inexorable* in its hostility towards the Jews? For the policy of keeping the Jewish survivors in a Europe which for them was haunted—and keeping them out of Palestine, if necessary by British force—this policy was above all futile, because a Britain now dependent upon the US could not make war upon Jews. Thus this British policy to keep the refugees out of Palestine, pursued ever more obsessively, involved Britain in unsuccessful pressures on the Mediterranean countries to keep Jewish illegal immigrants from the ports; in increasingly acrimonious British naval action against the wretched illegal immigrant ships; in shameful incidents like Bevin sending back Jewish refugees to Germany; in the futile despatch of 60,000 British troops to Palestine, where they did nothing. Finally, it involved Britain in a humiliating exit from the Palestine Mandate in the worst circumstances, with the country in shambles and war breaking out between Jews and Arabs. Was this formula for failure a "policy"?

And to what end was this anti-Jewish policy pursued? Within nine years, Britain was at war with Nasser's Egypt in the Suez crisis! And did appeasement by the Foreign Office gain any response of goodwill in Iraq—or in Aden? And, in retrospect, did Britain have any advantages for Arab oil over countries like, say, Germany, Switzerland or Italy, which simply purchased it without any political linkage?

The best to be said about Britain's anti-Zionist policies in the decade from the rejection of the Peel Report for the Partition of Palestine in 1937 to the creation of Israel in 1947 is that they were soon consigned to oblivion. When Sir Harold Beeley says it is absurd to equate "anti-Zionism" with "anti-Semitism", this is theoretically correct. But in practice it is often hard not to slip from one to the other. When Ernest Bevin in 1946 said that the American Jews wanted the Jewish survivors in Europe to go to Palestine because they did not want them in New York—and when he warned the Jews not to push to the head of the queue—he had plainly thus slipped. Who was giving Ernie Bevin the benefit of such kind and thoughtful advice?

T. R. FYVEL

London

OTHERS, NO DOUBT, will comment on Sir Harold Beeley's main theses in his review-article "The Middle East" (ENCOUNTER, February). I wish to comment only on his allegation of a lack of "ethnic connection" between 20th-century Jews and the Israelites of the Bible. Sir Harold cites Arthur Koestler's *The Thirteenth Tribe*, and concludes:

> "It is quite possible that there are more lineal descendants of the biblical Israelites among the Palestinian *fellahin* than anywhere else."

This, Sir Harold asserts, is one of the considerations overlooked by Martin Gilbert when he "simply assumes that Zionism is a manifestly just cause."

Converts to Judaism and their descendants, according to Sir Harold Beeley, have no right to regard Israel as their land. But, by the same token, naturalised Englishmen and their descendants have no right to call England their land. Who are the Jews? Those who associated themselves with Jewish destiny, studied the Jewish classics, and suffered in the anti-Jewish persecutions? or those (such as the putative descendants among the Palestinian *fellahin*) who left the Jewish fold and forgot that they were ever Jewish? Today there are white, brown, yellow, and black Jews. The attitude that would rule out those Jews who cannot show a genetically pure descent from the biblical Israelites should be recognised for what it is—racialism.

Arthur Koestler's book *The Thirteenth Tribe* (1976), which Sir Harold has apparently swallowed whole, is based on poor research and even poorer logic. The old theory that the Polish Jews were descended from the Khazars is no longer taken seriously by any reputable scholar. But even if the theory were correct, so what? The Jews (contrary to Koestler's mistaken belief) have never claimed racial purity, or regarded it as of the slightest importance. The "descent" from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is a spiritual, not a physical, descent, as Maimonides pointed out in a famous letter to Obadiah the Proselyte. To this day, when a convert to Judaism is given a Hebrew name, he is called "son of Abraham."

Nothing could be more ridiculous than Koestler's recital (with an air of one revealing shameful secrets) of facts about the wide extent of Jewish proselytism that are not only well known to the Jews but are a matter of pride. Koestler imagines that he has refuted Judaism because of his attack on a Jewish "racialist purism" that does not exist. This misconceived campaign is not merely an instance of Koestler's perpetual need for "rhetorical animus" (Stephen Toulmin's phrase in the same issue of ENCOUNTER) but is part of his long attempt to exorcise his own Jewishness (documented in my article

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"Koestler's Racism" in *Midstream*, March 1977).

I hope that Koestler's inaccurate lucubrations, now echoed by Sir Harold Beeley and others, will not become a fixed feature of anti-Zionist theory.

HYAM MACCOBY

Leo Baeck College
London

Caritas, Agape, Taxes

THOROUGHGOING LIBERTARIANS seem as reluctant to pay attention to criticism as thoroughgoing socialists. Dr Max Gammon [Letters, April] cannot really believe that I am under the impression that the NHS is financed by voluntary donations rather than by taxation. It is surely clear that by "sentiment of charity" I meant "kindness" and not "unforced gift." To forestall Dr Gammon's wilful misunderstanding, I should perhaps have used the unmistakable New Testament terms *caritas* or *agape*, instead of "sentiment of charity." The fact that the payment of taxes is compulsory does not exclude the possibility that these taxes may have been imposed and accepted out of spontaneous impulses of kindness rather than as a consequence of carefully thought-out political doctrines.

It may well be that the market in almost all cases offers not only a far greater measure of freedom but also a considerably higher degree of efficiency than state management. I certainly think so. Yet what many people want from a Health Service is not only freedom of choice and efficiency but also *inclusiveness*. People wish to be sure that nobody shall be left out; and they may be prepared to sacrifice a degree of efficiency or of liberty in return for that assurance. It may well be possible to provide this assurance under a predominantly but not wholly market-ruled system. But so long as so many prominent libertarians fail to understand why this question worries people, the libertarian cause will fail to develop the political momentum it needs to produce concrete results—which, I think, would be a pity.

To put the point more plainly still. In Britain at least, to reorganise on market lines our hospitals, schools or any other service now predominantly run by public authorities, you will first have to convince people that the very poorest will not suffer. Otherwise, you will get nowhere.

FERDINAND MOUNT

London

Tocqueville, Draper, Aron

IN his interesting survey of opinions on Russia and America by Tocqueville's precursors ("Prophets of the Cold War", ENCOUNTER, January), Theodore Draper criticises Raymond Aron for writing that he "was the first, a century ago, to give a classic form to the antithesis *Washington* or *Moscow*." According to Draper there is no such antithesis in Tocqueville's work.

> "He did not say or even imply that America and Russia were bound to clash or compete after each achieved its semi-global destiny."

He belonged to the school of thought which "instead of conflict foresaw a division of the world."

There is no more basis for attributing to Tocqueville this idea than for calling him a prophet of the "Cold War." His views cannot be literally transposed into another historical context; but that does not mean that his attitude and reasoning are not sufficiently indicative to question the emphasis of Draper's interpretation. He himself stresses that Tocqueville's political sympathies were not "equally divided between Russia and America" and refers to the famous passage from *Democracy in America* contrasting Russians and Americans. It is difficult to see why the "antithesis" contained in it should imply "Moscow *and* Washington" (Draper's interpretation) rather than "Moscow *or* Washington" (Aron's interpretation). As Tocqueville wrote:

> "The American struggles against the obstacles that nature opposes to him; the adversaries of the Russian are men. The former combats the wilderness and savage life; the latter, civilization with all its arms. The conquests of the American are therefore gained by the ploughshare; those of the Russian by the sword. The Anglo-American relies upon personal interest to accomplish his ends and gives free scope to the unguided strength and common sense of the people; the Russian centres all the authority of society in a single arm. The principal instrument of the former is freedom, of the latter servitude."

I may perhaps also mention that Warsaw censors evidently share Raymond Aron's view of Tocqueville. They have just cut out the above quotation from the 1976 Polish edition of *Democracy in America* (brought out by The State Publishing Institute, PIW). The

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passage which concludes Vol. I has simply been dropped down the memory-hole.

LEOPOLD LABEDZ

Survey Magazine
London

Revs & Revolutions

DAVID MARTIN'S stimulating article (ENCOUNTER, January) contained a phrase which struck me as logically misleading, perhaps even dangerous. "Race and poverty", he wrote, "are moral issues", as though the two things were of the same "genus." "Poverty" may be defined as a moral issue; "race" is a biological fact not an issue, still less a moral one. "Race" is not a problem to be solved; as Groucho Marx observed about sex, it is here to stay!

Even if Professor Martin meant "racism" or "racialism", perhaps he should have defined the term and say where and how it differs from "nationalism" or even from "patriotism." Animosities and hostilities have existed between different races in all parts of the world throughout recorded history; and it seems a false simplification to suggest that they can be removed by legislation or cured, like poverty, by thinking of them in terms of a moral issue. Political action can do something to remove injustices and discrimination within a single community but there is little evidence that, if they are forced to live alongside each other, different races—say, Turks and Greeks, Jews and Arabs, even English and Welsh—get to like each other better or behave better to each other. Unfashionable though it may be to say it, is it not at least arguable that *"apartheid"* is one valid way of curing racialism? After all, aren't we going to have referendums on that very subject shortly ourselves? Our thinking about "race" seems a bit muddled, even dishonest.

H. JUSTIN EVANS

Glebe House
Church Stretton
Salop

I MEANT that there are important moral issues tied up with differential treatment of groups defined or partly defined on criteria of "race" though that is in itself a notoriously ambiguous word. I am afraid I cannot write lectures *en passant* about the precise meaning of "race" or the range of realistic and unrealistic approaches which have been proposed.

DAVID MARTIN

London School of Economics

AUTHORS

Douglas Dunn's latest book of poems, *Barbarians*, is published by Faber & Faber.

Stephen Hearst is a documentary television writer and producer who in the 1950s was responsible for such series as *The Glory that was Greece* with Compton Mackenzie and *The Grandeur that was Rome* with Mortimer Wheeler. In the 1960s he became Head of Arts Features, BBC Television, when his department produced Lord Clark's *Civilisation* and Alistair Cooke's *America*. From 1972–78 he was in charge of Radio 3.

He writes: "I do hope you will allow me to make clear that the paper is being published with the agreement of the BBC and not against its wishes. So many papers have 'leaked' in recent years that some of the newsworthiness of this one, if it has any, is precisely due to BBC management saying it welcomes its publication. . . ."

Readers may remember, in our long-standing concern with this problem, the article by Henry Fairlie, "The BBC: Voice of the Establishment" in ENCOUNTER for August 1959.

Walter Kaufmann is Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University. His various books include studies of *Hegel* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), of *Nietzsche* (n.e. Vintage Books, 1973), and of *Religion from Tolstoy to Camus* (n.e. Harper & Row, 1965).

Boris Goldovsky's memoirs, *My Road to Opera*, edited by Curtis Cate, are published in the United States by Houghton Mifflin. His other books include *Bringing Opera to Life* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968), and, as co-author, *Bringing Soprano Arias to Life* (Schirmer Books, 1973) and *Accents on Opera* (1953).

The drawing of Serge Koussevitsky is by B. F. Dolbin and of Fritz Reiner by Alfred Bendiner.

Jean Lacouture's new book, *Survive le peuple cambodgien!*, is published by Editions de Seuil in Paris. Among his translated works are biographies of *André Malraux* (Deutsch, 1975) and of *Nasser* (Secker, 1973).

John Harvey lectures in English at Cambridge and is a Fellow of Emmanuel College. His novel *The Plate Shop* was published by Collins this spring.

John Bossy, until recently Reader in Modern History at the Queen's University of Belfast, is now Professor of History at the University of York. He is the editor of Outram Evennett's posthumous *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation* (1970), and his study of *The English-Catholic Community 1570–1850* was published in 1976 by Darton, Longman & Todd.

Tom Paulin is a Lecturer in English at Nottingham University. He is the author of *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception* (Macmillan, 1976) and a volume of poems, *A State of Justice* (Faber, 1977).

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London

LATE-LATE SHOW: The rape of a 54-year-old spinster was watched in amusement by a crowd of Post Office workers, a court heard yesterday.

The men were on a platform at Waterloo Station, London, when the last train from Clapham pulled in—with the rape going on in one of the brightly lit carriages.

They thought they were watching a free late-night sex show and eventually wandered away without calling for help. The Old Bailey heard that until a passenger raised the alarm and the police arrived, the attacker, 26-year-old Peter McIlroy, carried on with the rape.

McIlroy, of no fixed address, admitted the attack and was jailed for life.

DAILY MAIL

New Delhi

GAOL READING: *Mrs. Indira Gandhi spent a restful first day in Tihar jail today.*

Mrs. Gandhi is lodged in ward No. 17 of the jail, the one in which Mr. George Fernandes spent his days during his trial in the Baroda dynamite case.

But the ward has been done up since then, jail officials said, and Mrs. Gandhi is accorded "every facility that is due to a former prime minister of the country."

Jail officials were reluctant to talk but it is learnt that ward No. 17 is actually an entire barrack that has been renovated. It can accommodate 18 cots, a security officer on duty said.

Mrs. Gandhi's room is equipped with a television and a room heater. It has an attached bathroom.

Mrs. Sonia Gandhi took along with her some books for Mrs. Gandhi. Among them were "Diplomacy in Peace and War" by T. N. Kaul, "Master of Bow Street" by John Creasey, "Lipika" by Rabindranath Tagore, "Bhagwad Gita" translations by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and "Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism" by Daniel Bell.

TIMES OF INDIA

London

NEW LEFT TURNS: *"We live in a world not of our own making, and we have to deal with cash flows and profitability," says Richard Cooper, of one of Britain's largest Left-wing publishers, Pluto Press. "Commercial success is the pre-requisite of political success. There's no point in staying inside a Left-wing ghetto."*

London's Institute of Contemporary Arts seems an appropriate place to talk about Left-wing ghettos, and that emerged as the theme of the conference on "The Left in Print" held there on Saturday, attended by people from radical magazines and publishing companies, as well as academics. Pluto describes itself as a revolutionary socialist publisher, but as it gets larger, outside pressures force it to adopt conventional structures of organisation.

"We must learn advanced capitalist techniques if we want to sell more than 5,000 copies of any title," says Charles Landry of Publication Distribution Cooperative, which distributes both magazines and books to Left bookshops. To get a magazine into a newsagent, you've got to go through the commercial wholesalers who run magazine distribution in this country.

Michael Lane, of Essex University, whose book on the Book Trade has so far been rejected by 47 publishers, told the conference that Left publishers should be bringing out books on things like radical gardening and radical Do-It-Yourself. It's a direction that magazines have already taken. The new New Left is reading "On Yer Bike", a radical motorbike mag, and Rock Against Racism's newspaper, "Temporary Hoarding."

NEW SOCIETY

London

PENMANSHIP: Hitler is ever-popular in the sale rooms. A 1927 first edition of Volume II of "Mein Kampf" fetched £650 in Christie's today. The high price was no doubt caused by the inscription in the Führer's own hand: "There are no rights without protection by power."

EVENING STANDARD

London

CASH CHAOS: *The script for a planned film featuring the controversial "Sex Pistols", gave a lesson in manufacturing a punk rock group, Mr Justice Browne-Wilkinson was told in the High Court yesterday. It said:*

"Find yourself four kids. Make them hate each other. Make sure they can't play."

The group's manager, Malcolm McLaren, was scripted as saying:

"The main asset is a band that can't play. Cash comes out of chaos."

Johnny Rotten, the group's lead singer, is suing Mr McLaren's management company, "Glitterbest", following the break-up of the Sex Pistols last year. He is asking the judge to appoint a receiver to collect and preserve money for members of the disbanded group.

The 29-page script also referred to making newspaper headlines by shouting about incest, drugs, and necrophilia. It contained references to Jack the Ripper, the Moors murderess Myra Hindley, and the Cambridge rapist.

It referred to Mr McLaren saying that he found John Lydon [Johnny Rotten's real name] lurking in a shop corner. "Had it not been for his green hair I would have taken him for Micawber's clerk."

The planned film also had scenes of the train robber Ronald Biggs featured with the group and the script contained the phrase:

"Cosh the driver. Belsen was a gas."

In written evidence the 22-year-old singer said Mr McLaren was not interested in the group's music but only in publicity.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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